

CLEAR HORIZONS

Vol. 2, No. 1

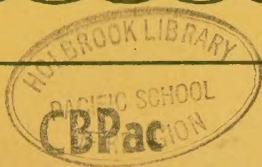
A QUARTERLY

June, 1941

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Clear Horizons

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 1

With this issue of CLEAR HORIZONS we begin the second year of our existence.

Starting in June, 1940, with only a couple of hundred advance subscriptions, we printed 5,000 copies, on faith. At this, the end of the first year, the supply is almost exhausted.

We wish to ask the indulgence of our subscribers and friends for the many mistakes that have occurred in our mailing department. To begin with, most of our help was volunteer. Part of our staff was located in Chicago, the rest in St. Paul. Subscriptions went to both cities. Another cause of confusion arose from the fact that some of our friends enclosed checks for CLEAR HORIZONS along with orders for books, or gifts to the Louise Foundation. Passing through so many departments, through untrained hands, many errors crept in. We humbly apologize.

Now, with a subscription list of 2,500, and a full time staff at work, centered completely in St. Paul, we trust we shall have no further difficulty.

Our subscribers will help in this, by mailing their orders and renewals directly to CLEAR HORIZONS, with separate remittance for book orders to the Macalester Park Publishing Company, or gifts for the Louise Foundation.

CLEAR HORIZONS

A Quarterly of Creative Spiritual Living

GLENN CLARK, *Editor*

HELEN WENTWORTH, *Managing Editor*

Published June, September, December, March

By

MACALESTER PARK PUBLISHING COMPANY

Macalester Park

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

SUBSCRIPTIONS

SINGLE ISSUES 25c

ONE YEAR \$1.00

Two Additional Gift Subscriptions \$1.50

Entered as second-class matter September 19, 1940 at the Post Office at St. Paul, Minn., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

JUNE, 1941

Clear Horizons

An Adventure in Solving Problems in a Heavenly Way

Second Year

Volume 2, No. 1

¶ This well known international figure has never given a more penetrating statement of his views of prayer than here.

Prayer As the Source of My Strength

M. H. Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi)

PRAYER has saved my life. Without it I should have been a lunatic long ago.

I have had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it was because of prayer.

Prayer has not been part of my life as truth has been. Prayer came out of sheer necessity.

I found myself in a plight where I could not possibly be happy without prayer. The more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it.

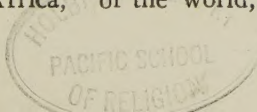
I had attended the Christian religious services in South Africa,

but they failed to grip me. My Christian friends supplicated God, but I could not do so. I failed grievously.

I started with disbelief in God and prayer. And until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. At that stage I felt that as food was indispensable to the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul.

In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer-starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer.

Three of the greatest teachers of the world, Buddha, Jesus and



Mohammed, have left unimpeachable testimony that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it.

Millions of Christians, Hindus, and Mussulmans find their own solace in life in prayer. Either you vote them down as liars, or as self-deluded people.

I will say that this "lying" has a charm for me, a truth-seeker, if it is "lying" that has given me that mainstay or staff of life, without which I could not dare to live for a moment.

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace comes from prayer.

I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Every one is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks trod by the ancient teachers.

It is beyond my power to induce in you a belief in God. There are certain things which are self-proved and certain things which are not proved at all. The existence of God is like a geometrical axiom. It may be beyond our heart grasp.

I shall not talk of an intellectual grasp. Intellectual attempts are

more or less fallacious, as a rational explanation cannot give you the faith in a living God. For it is a thing beyond the grasp of reason. It transcends reason.

There are various phenomena from which you can reason out the existence of God, but I shall not insult your intelligence by offering you a rational explanation of that type. I would have you brush aside all rational explanations and begin with a simple childlike faith in God. If I exist, God exists. With me it is a necessity of my being, as it is with millions. They may not be able to talk about it, but from their life you can see that it is a part of their life.

I am only asking you to restore the belief that has been undermined. In order to do so, you have to unlearn a lot of literature that dazzles your intelligence and throws you off your feet.

Start with the faith which is also a token of humility and an admission that we know nothing, that we are less than atoms in this universe. I say we are less than atoms because the atom obeys the law of its being, whereas we, in the insolence of our ignorance, deny the law of nature.

But I have no argument to address to those who have no faith. Once you accept the presence of God, the necessity for prayer is inescapable.

Let us not make the astounding

claim that our whole life is a prayer, and that therefore we need not sit down at any particular hour to pray. Even men who were all the time in tune with the Infinite did not make such a claim. Their lives were a continuous prayer, and yet for our sake, let

us say, they offered prayer at set hours and renewed each day the oath of loyalty to God.

God, of course, never insists upon the oath, but we must renew our pledge every day. I assure you we shall then be free from every imaginable misery in life.

From a recent newspaper article.

A Prayer of Jesus

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

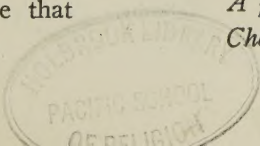
I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine.

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

*A portion of the 17th
Chapter of John.*



¶ A powerful presentation of two fundamental requirements of prayer.

The Strength of Weakness

O. Hallesby

TO pray is nothing more involved than to let Jesus into our needs. To pray is to give Jesus permission to employ His powers in the alleviation of our distress. To pray is to let God glorify His name in the midst of our needs. The results of prayer are, therefore, not dependent upon the powers of the one who prays. To pray is nothing more involved than to open the door, giving Jesus access to our needs and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them.

Let us think of patients who are ill with tuberculosis. The physicians put them out in the sunlight and fresh air, both in summer and in winter. There they lie until a cure is gradually effected by the rays of the sun. The recovery of these patients is not dependent upon their thinking, in the sense of understanding of the effect of the sun's rays or how these rays work. The treatment is most successful if the patients lie very quietly and are passive, exerting neither their intellects nor their wills. It is the sun which effects

the cure. All the patients need to do is to be in the sun.

Prayer is just as simple.

Prayer is something deeper than words. It is present in the soul before it has been formulated into words. It is an attitude of our hearts, an attitude of mind. Prayer is a definite attitude of our hearts toward God, an attitude which He in heaven immediately recognizes as prayer, as an appeal to His heart. Whether it takes the form of words or not, does not mean anything to God, only to ourselves.

What is this spiritual condition? What is that attitude of heart which God recognizes as prayer? I would mention two things.

In the first place, helplessness. This is unquestionably the first and surest indication of a praying heart. It makes us attached to God and makes us more strongly dependent upon Him than words can describe. Recall the words of Jesus, "Without me ye can do nothing." In one single line He tells us here what it takes us a whole lifetime to learn, and even when we reach the portals of death we have not learned it fully.

From "Prayer," by O. Hallesby. Copyright Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis. Translated by Andrew J. Carlsen.

I never grow weary of emphasizing our helplessness, for it is the decisive factor not only in our prayer life, but in our whole relationship to God. As long as we are conscious of our helplessness we will not be overtaken by any difficulty, disturbed by any distress or frightened by any hindrance. We will expect nothing of ourselves and therefore bring all our difficulties and hindrances to God in prayer. And this means to open the door unto Him and to give God the opportunity to help us in our helplessness.

I come now to another aspect of that attitude which constitutes the essence of prayer, that condition of the heart which God recognizes as prayer rising to Him from earth, whether uttered or not. It is written, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." Without faith there can be no prayer, no matter how great our helplessness may be. Helplessness united with faith produces prayer. Without faith our helplessness would only be a vain cry of distress in the night.

When an honest soul examines himself in the light of the Scriptures, he soon finds that faith is just what seems lacking in his prayers. He doubts before he prays, while he prays and after he has prayed. But you have more faith than you think you have. You have faith enough to pray;

you have faith enough to believe that you will be heard. Helplessness becomes prayer the moment that you go to Jesus and speak candidly and confidently to Him about your needs. This is to believe.

The protest of the carnal mind against prayer is made indirectly, very cleverly and at the opportune time. It will mobilize all the reasons for your not praying now: You are too busy; your mind is too pre-occupied; your heart is not inclined toward prayer; later on you will have more time, your mind will be more calm and collected, and you will be able to pray in a more devotional frame of mind. If the battle is lost at this point, the enemy has already won the first skirmish. But if we do gain the victory here, our prayer-struggle is by no means over. You try to keep your thoughts collected and to speak with God, but you succeed only for a moment now and then.

The only way in which we can gather and keep collected our distracted minds and our roaming thoughts is to center them about Jesus Christ. By that I mean we should let Christ lay hold of, attract, captivate and gather about Himself all our interests. Then the peace of God will descend with healing and blessing upon our distracted souls.

Quietude, even in the purely out-

ward sense, means a great deal to our inward composure. Not until we have come apart from those things which divert our attention to outward things, are our souls free to engage in inward activity. Or perhaps we should speak first of that inward passive state known as the devotional attitude. As soon as outward things lose their distracting influence over our soul-life, God Himself can attune our souls to prayer, because we are in a devotional attitude.

Many who pray are not aware of this. As soon as they enter into their secret chamber they begin at once to speak with God. Take plenty of time before you begin to speak. Let quietude wield its influence upon you. Give God time to play the prelude to prayer for the benefit of your distracted soul.

We are disposed to emphasize activity in prayer too much. From the time we begin and until we finish we are busily engaged in speaking with God. That should not be all. We should also be still and permit ourselves to be examined by the Physician of our souls. We should submit to scrutiny under the holy and penetrating light of God, and be thoroughly examined, spiritually fluoroscoped and X-rayed, in order to ascertain just where our trouble lies. The ailment which afflicts the souls of men cannot be cured except by

light-ray treatment. The light of heaven must enter into our souls, and every affected part must be exposed to its rays.

Our quiet hours with God should be daily light-ray treatments of this kind. But they are not. We talk to God all the time. When we are through talking, we say Amen and go our way.

Supposing you did this at the doctor's office. Suppose when your turn comes you begin and tell him about all your pains and troubles. And then when you have talked a long time, suppose you get up, bid a polite adieu and leave. What would the doctor think? Most likely he would think that some demented person had been in his office by mistake. God has multitudes of such patients in His waiting room every day. That is one reason, too, why our seasons of prayer mean so little to us. We go out just as we came in.

God's strange and often incomprehensible way of dealing with us is prompted by His love, which is so great that He not only desires to give us what we ask for, but much more. As Luther says, "We pray for silver, but God often gives us gold instead." Every time that Jesus sees that there is a possibility of giving us more than we know how to ask, He does so. And in order to do so He often has to deal with us in

ways that are past our finding out.

There is something about God's attitude toward our prayers that is hard to understand. Our striving is a struggle, not with God, but with ourselves. There are things in us which are a hindrance to our intercessory prayers. These hindrances are what the Spirit of prayer points out to us, and immediately the struggle begins. Permit me to mention the following:

First and foremost, our selfishness—the fact that we live and move in such a narrow circle that the Spirit of prayer cannot create in our hearts true zeal for others.

Secondly, our love of ease. We begin by praying for something for ourselves or others, then we get tired of praying, and little by little our praying ceases. Jesus "spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and faint not."

In Mark 9:29 Jesus says, "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer and fasting." The Hebrew word for fasting signifies the humble submission of the soul to God, the Holy One. Fasting is not confined to abstinence from eating and drinking. Fasting really means voluntary abstinence for a time from various necessities of life, such as food, drink, sleep, rest, association with people, and so forth. The purpose of such

abstinence for a longer or shorter period of time is to loosen to some degree the ties which bind us to the world of material things and our surroundings as a whole, in order that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen and eternal things.

Jesus shows that fasting is the means whereby believing prayer can mediate the accession of needed power from God. To make use of a mechanical but vivid illustration, we might compare this with the transmission of electrical power. The greater the volume of power to be transmitted, the stronger the connection with the power house must be, that is, the larger the cable must be.

Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth. Jesus says in effect that the greater the volume of power to be transmitted from above, the stronger must be the prayer cable which unites the soul with God. How does this take place?

Fasting helps to give us that inner sense of spiritual penetration by means of which we can discern clearly that for which the Spirit of prayer would have us pray in exceptionally difficult circumstances. At the same time it helps to cleanse our souls of any impure motives which might be present when we pray for mighty

acts. This cleansing takes place when we, in the quietude and concentration of fasting, discover the love of honor and other impure motives which lie concealed in our prayers, and when we receive power to confess these things to the Lord, saying, "I would rather

that the miracle be not permitted to take place than that I by taking honor to myself should defile Thy name and desecrate prayer. But if Thou canst perform the miracle without disturbing or desecrating anything that is Thine, then grant it, Lord."

O. Hallesby, Ph.D., is professor in the Independent Theological Seminary, Oslo, Norway, and author of "Why I Am a Christian."

A great master of the spiritual life said something of this sort: "I have learnt to meditate by taking a verse of the Gospels, or a truth of the faith, and thinking it over with God."—*W. J. Knox Little*.

Humility is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, or irritated, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble.—*Selected*.

A missionary to China said: "I feel very buoyant this morning; somebody must be praying for me at home."

☞ Prayer is a way to human and divine co-operation. It is "the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul."

High Communing

Winfred Rhoades

NO ONE statement and no single point of view can tell what prayer is. One person stresses one aspect of prayer, another lays emphasis on something different. To people in general the thought that makes the greatest appeal is the thought of prayer as a utility. But utility is not the highest or most important function of prayer. Prayer is something of much more consequence than that. It is a high communing. It is a lifting up of the whole man to association with the loftiest that can be thought. It is entering into the secret place of the Most High. It is a giving of the human spirit to meet and mingle with the divine Spirit. It is a presenting of the human mind for communion with the mind of God. It is a lifting up of the soul in aspiration and seizure: to aspiration for and seizure of the nobler and more abundant life that is possible to the human creature that has been made in the image of God.

It is a man's thoughts that make him to be what at last he is. He who communes habitually with Mammon becomes in course of time Mammonized and is likely to be

conspicuous for his cupidity and avarice. He who communes with nastiness becomes nasty, and his character will probably reveal itself in his face. He who lives habitually with elevated thoughts reveals the fact in character, in soul, and even in the tincture of his features. The lofty style and elevated thoughts of such books as the *Religio Medici* and the *Preces Privatae* do not come forth from men who live in low intellectual and spiritual communings.

Our business as men and women made in the image of God is to develop that image of God in ourselves. All of us need enlargement continually, and always more enlargement. Enlargement, that is, of mind and spirit. That can come only by developing the habit of living day by day in communion with something loftier and greater than ourselves. The practice of living habitually in communion with God leads to enlargement. Every task, every opportunity, every need, every challenge that comes during the day is dealt with in communion with the mind and spirit of God. The soul gets into the habit of dwelling always in the secret place

of the Most High. Living with God, the soul becomes like God. And that is what the soul must do if it is to know the reality of life.

When Emerson wrote that "prayer that craves a particular commodity,—anything less than all good,—is vicious," he wrote in extreme terms. Nevertheless he made a statement that deserves to be pondered. He put his fundamental thought in a better way when he said that "as soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all actions." He said something still more important, and came not far from the heart of the matter when he spoke of prayer as "the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view." And when he added that prayer "is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul," he said something very great and noble.

In some of the prayers of other religions and other ages that "soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul," that feeling that prayer is an utterance of the spirit's aspiration and one of its chief ways of reaching out for fullness and satisfaction, comes to exalted expression which even yet it is good to read and take into one's own soul. There is, for one illustration, a prayer in the ancient Hermetic religious literature in which line after line begins with the words "Holy is

God," and "Holy art Thou," lifting up the thought of him who prays to One who is "more potent than all power," transcends all excellence and surpasses all praises, is unutterable and to be "named only in silence." And when the element of petition is finally reached the asking is not for this or that thing which is desired, but for knowledge and strength and light and the ability to help those who struggle in darkness. That is making prayer a way of co-operating with God; and such prayer, such communication with Holiness and Mystery—must it not exalt and purify and enlarge the soul of him who communes?*

Shall we then not make petition? It has to be. Our desires are so profound and the needs we see round about us so great that the prayer of request and petition springs swiftly to our lips. And such prayer is justified if we hold in our minds the nature of Him to whom we pray. Is God one who must be begged and besought to spare the life of a beloved child or a needed mother, or to permit peace to come to the earth—begged and besought until he consents to change his mind and grant the desired boon? The question answers itself if you think of God as Jesus Christ thought of him. We ask for

*Quoted by S. Angus in *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, Scribner's, 1925.

the things that press upon our hearts in order that we may work together with God, in the way to which God shall lead, for the ends that really are God's ends. We look upon prayer as a way to human and divine co-operation, endeavor-

ing by means of prayer to open ourselves to the mind of God and to enter into the will of God.

And with all our petitioning we forget not that idea of "the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant spirit."

Dynamics of Asking

From *It Shall Be Done Unto You*. By Lucius Humphrey. Richard R. Smith, publisher.

"**Y**E SHALL ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

From the very beginning of time, asking and believing have put into operation creative laws which have produced the whole universe. To verify this statement consider whether there is anything in the world that is not a direct or indirect result of that which has been asked for, believed and received.

"If this is true," you comment, "how do I get so many things for which I do not ask and which I do not want?" For the simple reason that you have, in effect, actually but unknowingly asked for the unwanted things by allowing negative images to form in your mind just because you have not understood how to control your thought

and how to utilize the power of your Higher Intelligence.

Whether we are conscious of it or not, faith and fear are the two activities of the mind responsible for the things which are at this moment making or breaking our lives. How to direct Creative Power wisely is the knowledge we are all seeking. Lack of this knowledge and the unconscious use of this Power are the two negative factors at the root of all our failures and unhappiness and the cause of much ill health.

To employ intelligently the laws put into operation by the mental acts of asking and believing can mean life more abundant here and now. "Ask whatsoever ye will—believing—and it shall be done unto you," is not only a promise but a formula which naturally produces unlimited possibilities.

☞ Prayer is not a triangle, uniting
God and man and the thing prayed for,
but a straight line between man and God.

The Life of Prayer

George Albert Coe

PRAYER is the heart of religion. When you have told what a man's prayers are like, you have told what his religion is. One reason that prayer life does not reach a higher development among us is, that we still mix these incongruous elements: we cling to the notion that prayer is essentially asking for something, and yet we feel the incongruity of begging that God will do the very thing that He wishes to do, and the futility of begging for anything beyond the range of His benevolent designs. What we fail to see is, that the revelation of God's fatherhood for the first time opens wide before our eyes the door of prayer. It is an invitation to come boldly, just as we are, and talk to God about all that concerns us—our joys and sorrows, our defects and sins, our duties and aspirations. The begging attitude assumes the existence of some sort of barrier between God and the good that is prayed for, a barrier that only God can remove. But the good news that Jesus publishes is that no such barrier exists. If anything stands

between the Father's loving purpose and any good, it is something in us which we can remove, each for himself, by an act of his own.

Thus, the effectiveness of prayer does not consist in inducing God to do something, but, at most, in removing obstacles that tend to defeat His loving purpose. Prayer thus becomes not begging, but co-operation. It is the process of identifying our will and whatever effectiveness we may have in the world with the will and work of God. This makes the form of petition inadequate to express the inner reality and meaning of prayer. It may, perhaps, serve as a helpful symbol of what prayer intends to express of dependence, of trust, of the desire that God's will be done, and especially of our acceptance of His yearning purpose as our own. Thus, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," has the form of petition, but the substance of it is active identification of our wishes with God's purposes. Similarly, "Give us this day our daily bread," has the form of asking for a specific, physical thing, but the underlying thought

From *The Religion of a Mature Mind*. By George Albert Coe. Copyright, 1902, Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers.

of it is trust, or the recognition of our whole life, in all its details, as having an immediate relation to God's loving plans. This undoubtedly, is what Jesus meant when He told us that the Father knows what we need before we ask Him.

Let us plow deeper than the platitudes that prosperity begets worldliness, and worldliness paralyzes the spirit of prayer. The question is, why this happens, and how the tendency to it may be counteracted. May it not be that one cause is the habitual identification of prayer with asking for things? If the people believe that prayer is asking for things, then in proportion as their wants are satisfied, their conscious need of prayer will grow less.

But another cause of our difficulty is the purification of our idea of God, and the spiritualization of the notion of life. Behold our paradoxical situation: Prayer is one of the most characteristic acts of religion; yet religious progress has involved us in confusion and hesitation regarding it. Prayer is one of the characteristic facts of the life of Christ; yet the increasing assimilation of His own teaching of the fatherhood of God takes the emphasis out of our own prayers. The present duty is to take our Christian principles in greater earnest, and develop them to greater clearness.

We must look upon natural law

as simply God's way of doing things, and invariable because His intelligence and His purpose change not. The one God must not be split up into a God of nature *plus* a God who answers prayer, but nature itself must be looked upon as a part of the one divine process that has been called the moral order.

A second necessary step is the re-working of our conception of prayer into terms of personal relationship, pure and simple. The unspiritual view of prayer includes three factors—the praying soul, God, and a third something desired by the soul and obtainable through God. A fitting symbol thereof would be a triangle of such sort as to permit motion along its sides only in one direction. The soul is at one corner, the desired object is at another, but the soul can reach this object only by going around two sides of the triangle; that is, through God, who is at the third corner. We think of prayer as a means of getting something for ourselves or for another, and it is only when things turn out according to our wishes that we exclaim that they must be "providential." What we must do is to make God end and not means. The symbol that fits prayer is not a triangle, for there are not three factors in the conception, but only two, God and his child. Even a line, with God at

one end and man at the other, may not serve as a symbol of it, for prayer, in its higher forms, aims to be an actual meeting of God and the soul.

Prayer varies in its constituents according to age, temperament, and circumstances. There is danger whenever one person undertakes to mold his praying on the figure of another. We should strive, each in the way that expresses his own soul, to establish ideal personal relations with God. This, whatever form it takes, is prayer. The simple believer who asks that he may have rain for his wheat field, truly prays. His praying will not alter the order of nature, in which rain has its place, but through his prayer he assumes a relation of conscious dependence and trust toward God, and rightly assumes that God is interested in wheat. By bringing his daily occupation to God, the farmer attains to something greater than wheat, however—to a spiritual relationship that is of ultimate worth.

Another, forgetful of things about him, asks that his own life and character may become better. The response that God makes will not include any departure from the universal laws of spiritual growth, for character is not bestowed, it

must be acquired through obedience. Nevertheless, this is a high order of prayer, because it strives to establish personal relations with God on the plane of his moral purposes.

What effect will this view have upon our special times of prayer? If the ideal of prayer is a life in which every thought, every emotion, every act of our own is at the same time a social relationship between us and God, then the only complete prayer is the Christian life in its totality. When our lives reach this plane, special seasons of prayer will be superfluous, and in proportion as we approach it, we should expect special times and places to have less and less significance for us.

But since our Heavenly Father is never absent from us, yet our attention is too untrained, too narrow, to be always conscious of Him, we forget Him in various degrees, from positive sin to the unspiritual assumption that the things with which our occupation has to do are secular rather than sacred. And so, just because we are what we are, we need special times in which to recall our thoughts from all that is false, from all that is artificial, from all that is less than God. We need to talk to God face to face.

Prayer is not a conquering of God's reluctance, but a laying hold of God's willingness.—*Phillips Brooks.*

☞ Actions growing out of prayer are the most effective; and the real victory is won in secret, before the act is performed.

The Greatest Outlet of Power

S. D. Gordon

THE GREATEST thing any one can do for God and for man is to pray. It is not the only thing. But it is the chief thing. A correct balancing of the possible powers one may exert puts it first. For if a man is to pray right, he must first *be* right in his motives and life. And if a man *be* right, and put the practice of praying in its right place, then his serving and giving and speaking will be fairly fragrant with the presence of God.

The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who explain about prayer; but I mean these people who take *time* and *pray*. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. This something else is important. Very important and pressing, but still less important than prayer. There are people who put prayer first, and group the other items in life's schedule around and after prayer.

These are the people today who are doing the most for God.

It is wholly a secret service. We do not know who these people are, though sometimes shrewd guesses could be made.

God will do as a result of the praying of the humblest one here what otherwise He would not do. Yes, I can make it stronger than that, and I must make it stronger, for the Book does. Listen: God will do in answer to the prayer of the weakest one here what otherwise He could not do. That is to say our praying makes it possible for God to do what He otherwise could not do.

In its simplest analysis prayer—all prayer—has, must have, two parts. First, a God to give. "Yes," you say, "certainly, a God wealthy, willing, all of that." And, just as certainly, there must be a second factor, *a man to receive*. Man's willingness is God's channel to the earth. God never crowds or coerces. Everything God does for man and through man He does with man's consent, always. With due reverence, but very plainly, let it be said that God can do nothing for the man with shut hand and shut life. There must be an

*From *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, Copyright, Fleming H. Revell Company.

open hand and heart *through* which God can give what He longs to. An open life, an open hand, open upward, is the pipe line of communication between the heart of God and this poor befooled old world. Our prayer is God's opportunity to get into the world that would shut Him out.

There are some of our friends who think themselves of the practical sort who say, "the great thing is work: prayer is good, and right, but the great need is to be doing something practical." The truth is that when one understands about prayer, and puts prayer in its right place in his life, he finds a new motive power burning in his bones to be doing; and further he finds that *it is the doing that grows out of praying that is mightiest in touching human hearts.*

But the intensely fascinating fact to mark is this:—that the real victory in all service is won in secret, beforehand, by prayer, and these other indispensable things are the moving upon the works of the enemy, and claiming the victory already won. And when these things are put in their proper order, prayer first, and the other things second—*second*, I say, not omitted, not slurred over, done with all the earnestness and power of brain and hand and heart possible, but done *after* the work is done in secret, against the real foe, and done *while* the winner is still

claiming the victory already assured,—then will come far greater achievements in this outer open service.

Electricity is a strange element. It is catalogued in the study of physics. It furnishes many similes of graphic helpfulness in understanding more nearly much truth of the Spirit life.

In a large city plant a man may go and turn a switch, that is, move a little handle a very short distance. It is a very simple act, easily performed, involving almost no strength. But that act has loosened power in the house back of the switchboard out along the wires, and perhaps lighted a whole section of the city.

It is a secret service, usually, as far as any observers are concerned. It is a very quiet matter-of-fact service. But the power influenced is unmeasured and immeasurable. And no one, seemingly, thus far, can explain the mysterious but tremendous agent involved. The experts say they do not know. But the laws which it obeys are known. And as men comply with them its almost omnipotence is manifested.

Just such a switch-room in the spirit realm is one's prayer-room.

How does it come to pass that a man turns a few handles, and miles away great wheels begin to revolve, and enormous power is manifested? Will some one kindly explain? Yet we know it is so,

and men govern their actions by that knowledge.

How does it come to pass that a woman in Iowa prays for the conversion of her skeptical husband, and he, down in the thick of the most absorbing congress Washington has known since the civil war, and in full ignorance of her purpose, becomes conscious and repeatedly conscious of the presence and power of the God in whose existence he does not believe?

This leads to a very old question: Does prayer influence God? Prayer surely does influence God. It does not influence His purpose. It does influence His action. Everything that ever has been prayed for, of course I mean every right thing, God has already purposed to do. But He does nothing without our consent. He has been hindered in His purposes by our lack of willingness. When we learn His purposes and make our prayers we are giving Him the opportunity to act.

Talks about the certainty of prayer being answered are very apt to bring this question: "What about Paul's thorn?" The best light on this thorn is through man. The man explains the thorn. We have a halo about Paul's head; and rightly, too. What a splendid man of God he was! But Paul had some weak traits. Let us say it very softly, remembering, as we

instinctively will, that where we think of one in Him there come crowding to memory's door many more in one's self. A man's weak point is usually the extreme opposite swing of the pendulum on his strong point. Paul had a tremendous will. He was a giant, a Hercules in his will. Those tiresome journeys with their terrific experiences, all spell out *will* large and black. But, gently, now, he went to extremes here. Was it due to his over-tired nerves? Likely enough. He was obstinate, *sometimes*; stubborn; set in his way: *sometimes* head down, jaw locked, driving hard.

God had a hard time holding Paul to *His* plans. Paul had some of his own. We can all easily understand that. There was an unspeakable nearness of intimacy with his Lord for Paul. *The man was answered and the petition denied that the larger plan of service might be carried out.*

Shall we not put our wills fully in touch with God, and sheer out of sympathy with the other one, and persistently plead and claim for each loved one, "Deliver him from the evil one, and work in him Thy will, to Thy glory, by Thy power, in the Victor's name." And then add amen—so it *shall* be. Not so *may* it be—a wish, but so it *shall* be—an expression of confidence in God's power.

S. D. Gordon was one of the foremost writers on spiritual topics early in the 20th century.

The Supreme Fact of the Universe

Ralph Waldo Trine

A FRIEND has a beautiful lotus pond. A natural basin on his estate—his farm as he always calls it—is supplied with water from a reservoir in the foothills some distance away. A gate regulates the flow of the water from the main that conducts it from the reservoir to the pond. It is a spot of transcendent beauty. There, through the days of the perfect summer weather, the lotus flowers lie full blown upon the surface of the clear, transparent water. The June roses and other wild flowers are continually blooming on its banks. The birds come here to drink and to bathe, and from early until late one can hear the melody of their song. The bees are continually at work in this garden of wild flowers. A beautiful grove, in which many kinds of wild berries and many varieties of brakes and ferns grow, stretches back of the pond as far as the eye can reach.

Our friend is a man, nay more, a God-man, a lover of his kind, and as a consequence no notice bearing such words as "Private grounds, no trespassing allowed,"

stands on his estate. But at the end of a beautiful byway that leads through the wildwood up to this enchanting spot, stands a notice bearing the words "All are welcome to the Lotus Pond." All love our friend. Why? They can't help it. He so loves them, and what is his is theirs.

Everything in the immediate vicinity seems to breathe a spirit of kindness, comfort, goodwill, and good cheer. The very cattle and sheep as they come to the old stone-fence at the edge of the grove and look across at the beautiful spot seem, indeed, to get the same enjoyment that the people are getting. They seem almost to smile in the realization of their contentment and enjoyment; or perhaps it seems so to the looker-on, because he can scarcely help smiling as he sees the manifested evidence of their contentment and pleasure.

The gate of the pond is always open wide enough to admit a supply of water so abundant that it continually overflows a quantity sufficient to feed a stream that runs through the fields below,

From *In Tune With the Infinite*. By Ralph Waldo Trine. Copyright, 1933. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

giving the pure mountain water in drink to the cattle and flocks that are grazing there. The stream then flows on through the neighbors' fields.

Not long ago our friend was absent for a year. He rented his estate during his absence to a man who, as the world goes, was of a very "practical" turn of mind. He had no time for anything that did not bring him direct "practical" returns. The gate connecting the reservoir with the lotus pond was shut down, and no longer had the crystal mountain water the opportunity to feed and overflow it. A great change came over everything. On account of the lack of the life-giving water the flowers in the pond wilted, and their long stems lay stretched upon the mud in the bottom. The fish that formerly swam in its clear water soon died and gave an offensive odor to all who came near. The flowers no longer bloomed on its banks. The birds no longer came to drink and to bathe. No longer was heard the hum of the bees; and more, the stream that ran through the fields below dried up, so that the cattle and the flocks no longer got their supply of clear mountain water.

The difference between the spot now and the lotus pond when our friend gave it his careful attention was caused, as we readily see,

by the shutting of the gate to the pond, thus preventing the water from the reservoir in the hill which was the source of its life from entering it. And when this, the source of its life, was shut off, not only was the appearance of the lotus pond entirely changed, but the surrounding fields were deprived of the stream to whose banks the flocks and cattle came to drink.

In this do we see a complete parallel so far as human life is concerned? In the degree that we recognize our oneness, our connection with the Infinite Spirit which is the life of all, and the degree that we open ourselves to this divine inflow, do we come into harmony with the highest, the most powerful, and the most beautiful everywhere. And in the degree that we do this do we overflow, so that all who come in contact with us receive the effects of this realization on our part.

There is this difference between the lotus pond and your life and mine. It has no power in itself of opening the gate to the inflow of the water from the reservoir which is its source. In regard to this it is helpless and dependent upon an outside agency. You and I have the power, the power within us, to open or to close ourselves to this divine inflow exactly as we choose.

Silver Clothes

Angela Morgan

Someone in silver clothes
Came over the doorsill
To bid me good-night.
I saw the flicker of a star candle,
A phosphorescence curiously bright. . . .
A flare of Heaven on the door handle.
Someone in silver clothes
Bade me good-night. . . .
"All the way from Paradise to you, my child."
"Oh mother, oh mother, was the way wild?
Were the stars cold, mother, sharp for your feet?"
"No, daughter, oh daughter, starlight is sweet.
All the path was paved with love, your love and mine."
"Oh mother, oh mother, how your hands shine!
You had gone far, mother, far away from me—"
"Nay, daughter; nay, daughter, not if you could see.
Closer I than when the body put us out of reach,
And the wall of failing flesh barred us each from each.
Oh, my living daughter, I am living, warm as you,
Death was never so at all—only life is true.
All of us are living whom the world thinks cold;
All of us are radiant and none is old;
Some are in silver clothes, some are in white—"
"But, mother, dear mother, yours are so bright!
Even as you taught me when you were on earth—
'A light that lighteth every soul that comes to birth' . . .
I always knew it, mother, when you were here:
'Twas lustre out of Paradise that made you dear.
I always saw you, mother, whether others did or no,
I knew it was an angel companioned me below.
I knew it was an angel in a mother's guise—
And now you've come to tell me, from Paradise."
"Daughter, I am close to you—close, did you but see.
Could you reach a little way, you could come to me.
All your thoughts I understand, all your troubles share—
Only say you wish for me, and I am there.
Daughter, could you look at me, as I look at you,
You would see that never death—only Life—is true."

¶ We should furnish our minds as we do our homes,
with the furniture we want to live with through eternity.

Creative Mind and Awareness

Alice H. Stearns

IT DOESN'T grieve me because I cannot come upon creative mind as I would a pretty piece of silk, to sew into my philosophic quilt. Nor do I wish to collect all my pieces at one time. It's much more fun capturing one at a time, and sewing it in where it looks the prettiest. I am immensely pleased with the sound of a phrase: "an evolving universe." It makes me long more than anything else in the world, to have my individual part in that evolving, and to harmonize my little bit of music to the music of the spheres.

How am I to do this? I am satisfied it can be done through growing awareness, linked with never-ceasing effort. I have succeeded in capturing enough of the meaning of spiritual awareness to convince me that here is the pearl beyond price. It is worth far and beyond every ounce of effort I can possibly make, to obtain it. It is the wishing-carpet, the wishing-ring, and Aladdin's lamp, combined in one with the lure and magic of all three.

What is the first step? For me it is going to be health awareness. First of all I must open circulation

in my earthly body, in preparation for acquiring mental awareness. So long as my body is clogged with poison accumulations, from long years of food ignorance, I cannot move forward for finding this pearl of great price. If I have been facing in the wrong direction because of neglecting the natural laws of health, I shall right about face. For, if I were to persist in following the wrong road, it would be my own fault if I failed to reach the goal of my eager desire.

With bodily health secure, my next search is to be in the realm of intellectual knowledge. Choice in the world of Ideas is a more complicated one than in the world of Things. Necessity for choice waits at my door more insistently now, and demands decision. Where shall choice begin work? I shall begin with Literature: shall it be newspapers and popular novels? Time goes so fast, and I am able to cover more ground in that type of reading, than in the heavier kind. Custom, convention, propaganda enter my house every hour without ringing the bell. They stand in front of my chair, calling out in loud insistent tones, that I must do this and do that, read

this and read that, think this and think that, buy this and buy that.

But by this time I have learned to rise from my chair, and, summoning all my strength, to push those unwelcome visitors out of my house. Then I proceed to provide a stouter lock against the next house-breaker. Thus fortified I shall hereafter select for my time and energy only that kind of mind-furniture that I shall want to keep, when I am living entirely in the world of ideas. In that life the world of facts and things will have no chance to disturb me.

What kind of literature then shall I select, for my intellectual furniture? I'm going to choose not only the chairs, but the literary friends who have made them for me; they will be invited to occupy those chairs in my mental house. I shall invite also the artist-creators of my pictures to visit me mentally, when I pause in the day's occupation to admire their creations. I love to be in thought with those authors who have stimulated me. They take my hand and lead me forward to scenes of beauty which I had no idea existed. Those scenes are out among the stars of imagination. Those people will stay with me; they will be friends indeed, long after I have closed the books of their creation.

Now you will want to see the third story of this house of mine.

This part I visit a portion of each day; in this part of my house I shall seek to grow in spiritual awareness. For, if my mind is to progress in creativeness, I shall not be satisfied with intellectual awareness alone. If you lived in a three-story house, would you want your third floor to be bare of furniture, even though you didn't visit it quite as often as the rest of the house? For my part, even if I never climbed that high, I should feel lonely and shivery, to think of that third story having no furniture at all. For the time will come when I shall live on that floor all the year round. I must get busy planning pretty things for furnishing its rooms.

So: what I intend to do is to begin now, selecting one piece at a time—of the sort I shall not be ashamed of when the time comes to move up there. It won't do to put off the buying to some far-off future date. There are so many things that I shouldn't be able to get later on. If I buy that furniture now, it will keep, and I can look forward to enjoying it when the time comes.

Do you remember, in Maeterlinck's "Bluebird," the children's visit to the land of Memory, and the dear old grandparents they saw there? It pleases me to believe with Maeterlinck—and my reason tells me this is true—that

all the happy associations of the earth-life will live again, if we build an enduring foundation for them here and now. That is the meaning I get from that poem about Opportunity knocking but once at our door. It is the earth-life that is the one opportunity for building our own personal immortality. That opportunity is with us Now. We can't be sure that it

will come again so invitingly, if we fail to use it now.

Well, that is my way of building creative mind with awareness. These things are my choices. I could, if I chose, remain a child all my life. But I'd so much rather make the effort necessary to keep advancing, on to mental and spiritual adulthood. How do you feel about this?

* * *

Two Scotchmen were caught in a gale on a Highland loch. Dr. Norman McLeod, who happened to be one of them, was a big, burly fellow, the other a thin, frail-looking brother. As the sudden mountain storm came up, the little man said to Dr. McLeod, "Brother, let us pray together." "Na, na," said the Highland boatman, "the wee one can pray, but the big maun tak' an oar!"

* * *

A Southerner was out with colored Sambo in a boat when a terrific storm came up. "Shall we row or pray?" asked the terror-stricken man. "Massa, let's mix em," was the sensible reply.

* * *

An old colored preacher said: "If you ain't got no troubles, your prayers ain't got no suction."

* * *

A woman prays for patience, and God sends her a green cook.

Henry Ward Beecher.

☪ Prayer in its essence is communion with God,
loving intercourse between friend and Friend.

Creative Prayer

E. Herman

“**L**ORD, teach us to pray!”
the disciples pleaded.

We of today tend to deny that prayer can be taught. We insist upon its lyrical spontaneity. It is of the essence of genius.

In all other realms of human thought or activity, genius, so far from being regarded as a dispensation from rigid discipline, is looked upon as the only sufficient justification for the highest form of training. And in the case of so vital an achievement as prayer the discipline must be correspondingly thorough. It is not by merely forming study circles, or reading books on prayer, that we shall enter into its mysteries and know its power, but by a discipline co-extensive with life itself. Prayer is, in the last resort, worth exactly as much—or as little—as the man behind it.

We are slow to learn that effective prayer involves a constant interaction between the quality of soul we bring to our prayers and the sincerity of our desires. We are responsible not only for our prayers, but for providing the

background against which our prayer can energize. It is not too much to say that for every thought we give to prayer—excepting of course the actual practice of prayer itself—we should give ten to the life behind the prayer.

The general significance of prayer is not that of a spiritual process by which mountains are removed and benefits evoked. Prayer in its essence is communion with God. The simplest analogy—that of loving, trustful intercourse between friend and friend—is also the most profound. We seem curiously reluctant to believe that the prayer of friendship with God is the most influential type of prayer. To realize that it is so, one need only read the biographies of men whose lives have been nourished by prayer. Without a single exception the type of prayer that shaped their lives and overflowed in blessing upon their generation was simple heart-communion with their Heavenly Father.

We all tend to be infatuated with the idea of strength—that is why definitions of prayer in terms of force appeal to us so strongly—but

From *Creative Prayer*. By E. Herman. Harper and Brothers, publishers.

we fail to realize that all true strength is grounded in humility. We still relegate humility to the pale ranks of passive virtues and ornamental graces, whereas it is a stout and soldierly quality. Humility indeed is simply a sense of reality and proportion. It is grounded upon a knowledge of the truth about ourselves and about God.

When we read the life of the saints we are struck by a certain large leisure which went hand in hand with a remarkable effectiveness. They were never hurried; they did comparatively few things, yet they always seemed to hit the mark. Every bit of their life *told*. The reason is not far to seek. Their sainthood lay in their habit of referring the smallest actions to God. They lived in God; they acted from a pure motive of love toward God. Friendship implies a heart at leisure from itself. The supreme friendship demands a singleness of devotion, a simplicity and perfection of "intention towards God," which spells liberty and power. We know how an absorbing devotion to a great ideal or, more potently still, to a beloved person simplifies and unifies life. And to a soul that is wholly bent upon God, a thousand fretting cares and vexing problems which tear lives of others in pieces simply cease to exist. With the submerging of the

irrelevant, the soul is free to give itself to that which really matters.

The real question at issue is whether we have the kind of relation to God that is the only basis of prayer at its highest and best. For prayer, like any other human activity, can only be judged rightly by observing its normal manifestations; and it is not the more common, but the rarer forms of prayer which represent the normal. The lower forms—e.g., the spasmodic, instinctive cry of need—are instances of arrested development. Not the frenzied cry of sudden anguish, but the calm, trustful committal of faith, is the normal attitude of the praying soul.

Prayer which changes both the man who prays and the world he lives in is not achieved without concentrated effort. It demands a committal of soul, a self-surrender, which takes us into the deepest heart of religion. To make this surrender, most souls need to tarry in the place of preparation. Two trusty aids await us there: Silence and Meditation. They are part of the natural discipline of the healthy soul bent upon communion with God. They are as simple as daylight, and as sensible as reason itself.

If we read the biographies of the great and wise, be they statesmen or priests, teachers or poets, Roman Catholics or Quakers, we

shall find that they were men of long silences and deep ponderings. Whatever of vision, of power, of genius there was in their work was wrought in silence.

Before we have any real right even to discuss the difficulties of communion with God we must have resolved, at the cost of whatever hardship to our relaxed and dissipated souls, to learn the secret of silence.

More especially we must learn to cultivate a deep reticence regarding the affairs of the soul. Our prayers are thin and perfunctory in exact proportion as our tongues are glib and gratuitously communicative. This love of talk breeds a cowardly and servile temper which is the antipodes of dynamic prayer. For if prayer be indeed a great adventure, a giving of all for all, a staking of a man's whole life upon an unseen good whose only pledge is the Cross, then only the brave can pray.

We again and again weaken ourselves, and others, and miss the Divine consolation, by running to this person and to that before we make our need known unto God. In the joy of our discovery of the sacredness of human affection, we forget that it remains unshakably true that whatever be the power of human sympathy, the soul of man is created for direct, immediate communion with its God.

The selfishness of sorrow feeds upon speech. The vice of airing one's soul to any and every man whom we believe likely to prove sympathetic and helpful is eating the very core of reality out of those who practice it. There are times in our spiritual life when we need a human counsellor and guide, but nowhere are wisdom and self-restraint more imperative than here. Our Protestant practice allows us to give free rein to our craving for sympathy, to pour out our confidences with as much profusion and intimacy of detail as we feel inclined to, and to go back upon the matter of our self-revelation as often as we choose, re-opening the same question again and again and keeping evil memories green. It is at this point that the Confessional makes its most valid claim, for one of its rubrics requires that the penitent pledge himself to refrain from ever discussing again what has once been confessed, either with his confessor or with anyone else.

To pray well presupposes patient and systematic meditation; for meditation is nothing else than the art of thinking well and thoroughly upon the truths upon which prayer is based. There is no shirking the fact that it takes a strict and continuous discipline before the mind becomes tempered to the things of God, sensitive to the

tides of grace, and flexible in the hands of the Spirit.

If it is well to begin our meditation with the sweet familiar things that have sunk most deeply into our lives, we must beware of ending there. We need to wrestle with spiritual principles, to come to grips with the "hard sayings" of the Gospels, and the tremendous Pauline paradoxes.

Our meditation ought to resolve itself into a state of docile attention to the voice of God himself, a firm resolve to know Him better, and a sincere outgoing of our heart's desires to Him. We become aware at this stage that our conscious difficulties and needs are

not the deepest and more real, and we shall feel impelled to turn from our known selves to the God who searches and interprets the subconscious self. But while meditation must be related to personal problems, it must never be allowed to spell either self-introspection or absorption in one's own problems. Self-regard is the slum of the soul, and the supreme function of meditation is to lift us out of its squalor into the clear, pure air of the spiritual world. And we shall find, as we go on, our meditations, instead of growing more elaborate and complex, will grow steadily simpler, one single thought often sufficing to fill the quiet half-hour.

* * *

To pray together, in whatever tongue or ritual, is the most tender brotherhood of hope and sympathy that man can contract in this life.

Madame de Staël.

* * *

He asked for strength that he might achieve;
 He was made weak that he might obey.
 He asked for health that he might do greater things;
 He was given infirmity that he might do better things.
 He asked for riches that he might be happy;
 He was given poverty that he might be wise.
 He asked for power that he might have the praise of men;
 He was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.
 He asked for all things that he might enjoy life;
 He was given life that he might enjoy all things.
 He has received nothing that he asked for, all that he hoped for.
 His prayer is answered; he is most blessed.

Anonymous.

¶ We cannot argue anyone into a sense of the friendship of Christ. But the way of experience is certain.

The Reality of Christ's Friendship Today

Leslie D. Weatherhead

CHRISTIANITY began in a vivid, tremendous, transforming experience of the friendship of Jesus. It could never have continued unless the friendship had been sustained; unless those who had never seen Him could yet enter into the fellowship and become sure of Him also. There is no greater need in our time than that those who teach religion should concern themselves, not with tightening up the machinery, developing organization, or arranging more meetings; but rather to make Jesus real to men; *to invite them into that transforming fellowship which cannot be proved save by personal experience*, but which, when realized, brings men the glorious exhilaration, that sense of ineffable peace, and that escape from all bondage which are promised in the New Testament.

If we could prove to them by our lives that Christianity meant first of all a transforming experience of the friendship of Jesus, an exhilaration better than wine, a joy greater than pleasure, a peace

better than escape, a sense of liberty better than any free thinker has ever enjoyed, an answer—I do not say a solution—to all life's problems, and a conquest of personal sin and depression such as the man with the strongest will in the world never dreamed could exist, then men would make a beaten track to our door, eager to know our secret, passionately, vehemently desirous to enter into it. The truth is, most of us are living on low levels of experience. We have had *some* small experience. But we are like explorers who land on some new continent, and who, on fine days and Saturday afternoons, explore some of the valleys and foothills near the coast, and then build themselves bungalows and settle down on the beach and bathe in the breakers, but who never climb the mighty mountains behind them, where the resources of a continent lie waiting to be explored. *We have not realized the possibilities of our own faith.*

For some people Jesus is still imprisoned in history. They are

From *The Transforming Friendship*. By Leslie D. Weatherhead. Used by permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, publishers.

quite sure that He was; but they do not realize that He is.

I remember going, on one occasion, to see Maskelyne and Devant's programme of illusions in London. One item was called "The Artist's Dream." The artist had fallen asleep in a chair near the almost completed portrait which he had been painting of his wife, who had recently died. The picture showed her seated in a swing in the garden. As the artist slept, the woman in the picture stepped down from the easel and walked across to her husband. You could see the empty swing. Then she returned and the artist awakened. The dream had been so real that he arose and took the picture down, and in front of the audience he examined it, but it was, seemingly, just an ordinary picture again. I want to say to all who are worshipping a picture of Jesus in a frame called History—to people who are beaten in their lonely toilsome effort to be like the Hero of that picture—that there is a richer experience than they have yet known. If they will sit down quietly He will come out of the picture into their lives. A little faith—that kind of an effortless prayer which is the leaving of the *heart's door* on the latch—and the Guest will come as often as you want Him, and you will be carried further than a whole year of fussy

striving would take you; for He is not a ghost of the dead past, but a friend alive for evermore.

A friend of mine once attended a Roman Catholic service in which the priest argued for the literal presence of Christ's body in the consecrated wafer on the altar. After the service the visitor talked with one of the worshippers and asked him if he believed all that the priest had claimed. The worshipper, who was an old man, said something like this: "When I come to Mass, sir, I cannot follow what they do up at the altar. I just kneel down and think about Jesus. I think about that last week with His friends and the last supper; how He knelt in agony in Gethsemane; how they arrested Him and all night tortured Him and how He died." And the old man's eyes filled with tears. "I get very near to Jesus then, sir, and when I go home I feel that He comes with me." The old man didn't find a value in the Mass as such. He just knelt down in that quiet place and opened his heart in prayer, and his Friend came right in. Jesus stepped out from among the tombs of the dead years, out of the ghostly mists of strange rites, out of the haunted ruins built of ancient language and half-meaningless words—alive, vivid, present, royal, radiant, real. Is Jesus *real* to you?

The way of argument is irrelevant and impossible. The way of experience is certain. Try it. Sit down quietly for ten minutes every day for a month. Let your mind go out to Jesus. Think about Him. Believe that what He once was He certainly is. What He was for men and women years ago, He is for you today. All His followers would guarantee that you will find Him no ghost, but a Friend; no mere memory of long ago, but a living personal Saviour whose friendship will transform your whole nature. The very Christ of History who came to men across the troubled waters of the Galilean lake will become the Christ of Experience and come to you across the troubled waters of your twentieth-century life, with His soul-rejuvenating cry, "Courage; it is I;" and, "as an ineffable mystery you shall learn in your own experience who He is."

There does seem good reason to believe that however we confess and pour out our hearts to another, keeping nothing back, he cannot enter the very deepest place of our life. Words cannot quite make him see as we see. Words, in fact, cannot quite say *all* we mean. The outpouring may be very valuable; but the most intimate friendships must, I think, leave

one inner door of which only God carries the key.

There is, with all real friends, the kind of communion of spirit which can be expressed only in long silences, when soul to some extent does seem to penetrate soul. Lovers know that the loved one understands their hidden ideals, longings, aspirations, as no one else does.

We must make room for the thought that communion with God is planned at an even greater depth of personality. *We ought to perceive His comings into our deeper life*, the communion of His unseen with our unseen, by watching our thought, feeling, and will, which, as every one in these psychological days is tired of hearing, are the three indivisible parts of the human personality. If I have a thought, as I go about my work, which is high and lofty and liberating, with no meanness in it, I ought to say to myself, "The Friend has visited me today; He has touched my thoughts." If I find my feeling widening so that bitterness is purged right away, and I am possessed of a large sympathy, a broad tolerance, a deep brotherliness to all men, then I ought to teach myself to say, "The Friend has been near my feeling today." If I find myself no longer shrinking from the unwelcome task, telling myself that

in Him I am adequate for anything that may make a demand upon me, then I may say to myself, "The very fact that 'I cannot' has become 'I can,' and 'I can' has become 'I will,' means that the Friend has been near my will today." In this way we shall come to know how very often He is near, and we shall make the friendship a reality. If some one says, "But the heathen have this enlargement of thought, feeling, and will," that is not, in my view, an objection. It only shows that God is near them also. I am friendly to people who never think of me as their friend; but this does not lessen the reality of my friendship to those with whom I can be more intimate. Hundreds of people pray almost daily, "O Lord, be with me today," or "Let Thy presence be manifest amongst us all." Yet they hardly know what they mean or what they expect to happen, or how they expect God to manifest His presence. But the amazing experience of the transforming friendship we may have with Jesus applies to everyday life, and we must see the signs of its reality in the quiet daily growth and blossoming of our own personality.

Do we ask to see His face, not realizing that if He answered the prayer the vision would scorch our petty souls? Yes, we do. We are afraid that if He answered our

prayers He might make us more than we dare to be. And every time a man prays, "Give me . . ." Jesus answers, "Are you willing . . . ?"

Can we enter into friendship with God? We can. We can, as Brother Lawrence said, "practice the presence of God," but the only way I know of practicing the presence of God is by practicing the presence of Jesus, who makes God credible and real, and entering into the transforming friendship which He offers.

Let a story told by Mr. F. W. Boreham illustrate the truth. An old Scotsman lay very ill, and his minister came to visit him. As the minister sat down in the chair near the bedside, he noticed on the other side of the bed another chair placed at such an angle as to suggest that another visitor had just left it. "Well, Donald," said the minister, glancing at the chair, "I see I am not your first visitor." The Scotsman looked up in surprise, so the minister pointed to the other chair. "Ah," said the sufferer, "I'll tell you about the chair. Years ago I found it impossible to pray. I often fell asleep on my knees I was so tired. And if I kept awake I could not control my thoughts from wandering. One day I was so worried I spoke to my minister about it. He told me not to worry about kneel-

ing down. 'Just sit down,' he said, 'and put a chair opposite you, imagine that Jesus is in it and talk as you would to a friend.' And," the Scotsman added, "I have been doing that ever since. So now you know why the chair is standing like that." A week later the daughter of the old Scot drove up to the door of the minister's house and knocked at the door. She was shown into the study, and when the minister came in she could hardly restrain herself. "Father died in the night," she sobbed. "I had no idea death could be so near. I had just gone to lie down for an hour or two. He seemed to be sleeping so comfortably. And

when I went back he was dead. He hadn't moved since I saw him before, except that *his hand was out on the empty chair at the side of the bed*. Do you understand?" "Yes," said the minister, "I understand." The Scotsman, not by intellect or will, but by an imagination which had become faith, had accepted the gift of a friendship and made the Master real. Truly "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

The reality of this transforming friendship is reached not through argument but through experience.

The love of Jesus, what it is,

None but His loved ones know.

But *they know*.



Silence is in truth the attribute of God, and those who seek Him from that side invariably learn that meditation is not the dream but the reality of life; not its illusion but its truth; not its weakness but its strength.—*James Martineau*.



Every genuine prayer is a positive force in the universe of things. The motion may not reach to the outward visible result which the prayer contemplates; but every prayer, in proportion to the force that is in it, tends to that result."—Dr. Hedge: "*Reason and Religion*."



In the highest prayer, one gets into harmony with God, gets into His high state of mind, sees things as He does. One then knows what to say and how to say it. In such union with Omnipotence, one cannot fail to produce results.—*Von Eps*.



How rare it is to find a soul quiet enough to hear God speak!

Archbishop Fenelon.

☞ Prayer is the optic nerve of the soul.
Through it comes the vision of the
wonder of life.

A Technique of Private Prayer

George A. Buttrick, D.D.

“**A**FTER this manner, therefore pray ye.” That is to say, Jesus taught His disciples *how* to pray—a duty in which His Church has been remiss. We have urged people to pray, but we have given no clear guidance on the *manner* of praying. So today we are eager to rediscover certain simple, practical rules of prayer. This prescription is more important than any you could receive from the druggist, for it concerns your health—not simply the health of your body.

If God cannot be known, religion ends. Nay, it cannot even begin. What do we need most? Forgiveness—word that the violence we have done to ourselves, to other people, and to life, has been caught and lost in a great Calm! Zest—“another April to the soul!” And access of Life—not merely our human resource, which at best can only point the boat and set the sails, but the insweeping of an ocean tide to float all our stranded vessels. We need God. “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit.” That is what we

need—the clear witness of the Spirit, the brooding and breathing of another world.

Jesus said we could gain it through prayer. A little thing, this stilling of the mind to reverence, this schooling of the will! The optic nerve is a little thing, but it gives us sun, stars and all the wonders of the earth. Prayer is the optic nerve of the soul; we must not cut the nerve!

Then, where shall we pray? In some church, not only on Sunday, but privately on a weekday. Even more important is a quiet place at home. “Be still and know that I am God.” It must be a quiet place, beyond the clamor of the street, yea, beyond the fret of our own thoughts. If it is an accustomed place, all the better. We are creatures of time and place and habit; and worthy habits make worthy life. A few books there, little classics of devotion, at the bedside or on a kneeling bench, will help. A quiet place! Jesus would go to a mountainside, and stay there all night. Our age will perish of fever and shallowness unless Christian

From a sermon delivered ten years ago.

folk can learn to keep sanctuary.

When shall we pray? In the morning: we must greet each new day well-girded. In the Bible is an old story of a young man who could see round his city only a beleaguering army and a circle of grey hills; but the prophet of God, looking from the same window, could see the same hills bright with the rescuing hosts of God. The prophet prayed: "Open his eyes that he may see." So we must pray: we must meet each day with opened eyes.

And during the day we should pray. Jesus met every success and thwarting with prayer. And by prayer He was armed for every crisis.

But the most important time to pray is at night. Why? Because the mind is not inactive while the body rests: it "goes on." Paul said, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" anger "goes on" in the unconscious. If we pray at night, prayer goes on: it works radiantly in our nature while we sleep. If we give only ten minutes to prayer each night, we make the unconscious our ally—and God's ally. If we pray before an operation, we can control *that* unconsciousness which becomes otherwise a green nightmare. If we pray at night, we control *that* unconsciouness; while we rest, we are gaining a far deep-

er rest: God visits us by a secret stair, as a mother smooths her child's bed while he sleeps.

As to prayer itself, what are the steps?

Prayer begins, not in a claimant asking, but in a silence of the mind. Sometimes when we are troubled with sleeplessness we realize that all our muscles are tense: then we must persuade our limbs one by one to let go their striving. So with the self: we must persuade each hungry desire, each vain regret or vexing remorse, each bitter grudge, each straining hope, to "let go." The self is focused on God in silence and beyond all striving. The whole life must be focused.

After silence comes what we may call, for want of a better word, *expectancy*. Jesus was constantly talking about "faith." To Him it was the prime essential of prayer and life. In this initial silence of prayer we say to ourselves that whatever is in the orbit of Christ's will for us is ours—granted only that we pray and live as well as we can.

But when prayer breaks into speech,—what then? Verily, let it be in speech. Learn to pray audibly: any teacher will tell us that what is spoken is much clearer than what is merely thought. Silent prayer has its place, and a

wide place; but it is no substitute for spoken prayer.

Begin with a thanksgiving, not with a beseeching. A lecturer confronted a group of business men with a sheet of white paper on which was one blot. He asked what they saw. All of them answered: "A blot." None of them saw the white paper.

From thanksgiving, a true prayer proceeds to *confession*. Contrast requires it: God has been so good, and we have given Him selfishness for His love. If a vandal defaced a picture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, his real sin would not be against the Museum, or against the people who might have seen an unblemished picture, or against himself: his real sin would be the violence done to Beauty. Every wrongdoing is a gash in the ultimate order of things. "Against Thee, Thee only."

Again, the prayer should be specific. "This habit," "that impatience," "this prejudice," "that cowardice." The prayer of confession gives release: it turns penalty into a desired discipline; it frees the soul from sinning.

From confession the prayer moves to *intercession*. Our lives are joined as closely as cells in a body: we are members of a spiritual order. We should pray for one another, specifically. Mrs.

Humphrey Ward wrote a member of Parliament calling attention to the needs of a family in his constituency. He replied that he was so busy with problems of the race that he had no time for the individual; whereupon she filed the letter with the comment scribbled across it: "Our Divine Lord, when last heard from, had not attained this sublime attitude." If there is a grudge or rancor in us as we pray, we therewith bar the door against the coming of the Lord. Christ told us that we must first be reconciled with our foe, and then return to worship—since only then is true worship possible.

If after this Silence, Expectancy, Thanksgiving, Confession, Intercession, you are in any mood to crave gifts for yourself, let that asking now be made. It comes last. It will not seek this outward change and that specific plan: our puny wisdom, divided against itself, is not yet wise enough to rule the worlds! But it can talk intimately with God about all the daily needs and especially about our sorrows and anxieties. But it will covet more the "greater gifts." It will covet most the mind of Christ. When we say Amen, which means "So let it be," we utter our faith in God's power and at the same time we gird ourselves to a life in keeping with our prayer.

¶ God respects the sacred rights of the personalities He has created. He does not attempt to coerce human wills.

Prayer As a Fact

John Elliott Wishart, D.D., LL.D.

THE honest investigator who would make a "correct draft of human nature" must take into account this notable phenomenon, that men pray. It is a practice which is virtually universal.

Man is "incurably religious," and prayer is the natural and inevitable expression of his religious nature, and is not the exclusive possession of any of the great historic religions.

It does not depend upon the creed, though it may be marred by ignorance or error. It is at bottom seeking after God and communion with God. It may be put into words or be only a wistful thought, a breathing of desire. It may be an act of worship, but in some great souls it has seemed to be the habitual state of mind.

The loftiest souls at their greatest moments have not infrequently been thrilled with the sense of the presence of God, an enjoyment of fellowship in which nothing was asked and nothing needed, and the human response to the divine

manifestation was deep adoration. But such visits to the King's country always produce in a sensitive conscience a feeling of unworthiness like that which led Isaiah to exclaim, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;" and so true supplications must not lack the element of confession.

There is one fitting frame of mind when blessings have been received, and that is thanksgiving. Nor must we in our requests forget others. This act of worship grows in power when two or three are met together, and even in the closet when the doors are shut it ought again and again to take the form of intercession.

The very act and attitude of supplication carry certain implications. If it means fellowship, there must be some being with whom that communication is maintained. If it is adoration, there must be an object of reverence. If it is confession, there must be some one who is wronged, and to whom

From the *Fact of Prayer*—John Elliott Wishart, DD., LL.D. Copyright, Fleming H. Revell Company.

Dr. Wishart for years taught at the Presbyterian Seminary in San Francisco, Calif.

acknowledgment is made. If it is petition, there must be some one to hear and answer the request. All our spiritual aspirations are meaningless, they are indeed sheer folly, unless there be in the spiritual world something which corresponds to them and can finally satisfy them. As the eye is made for light and demands light, as the ear is made for sound and demands sound, as an intelligent mind is made for an intelligent environment, and demands an intelligent environment, so the prayer instinct is made for God and demands a God in whom the supreme religious values find their home. It is fundamental to the idea of prayer that it is a relation between two, the creature and the Creator.

A criticism of Goethe by Wordsworth was that his verse was "not inevitable enough," and Matthew Arnold agrees that the English bard at his best does have the quality which he thought the German lacked—as if the lines had been given to him. This high characteristic of spontaneity, of inspiration, in which nature itself seems to speak, belongs to much of the best art, to the songs of Schubert, to the pictures of Raphael. We say they are nearly perfect, as though measuring them by a standard.

Our faith, then, in the validity

of prayer—which means that there are spiritual realities that correspond to it—is at bottom faith that this is a sane and not a mad world, that nature is honest and does not deceive us, or, as all this really implies, that the Creator is a God of Truth.

Our religious values demand a God that is accessible. He must be "a very present help in trouble." For prayer is meaningless unless there be a God who can answer; it is equally meaningless, if he is so distant that our cries cannot reach Him. But faith insists that He is present, and that He, the unseen and intangible, is "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet."

Religion can never be satisfied with a Pantheistic conception of God, because it must be a relation of spirit to Spirit. If there is any reality in prayer, it is an experience in which intelligence speaks to intelligence. You cannot offer petitions to a stream of tendency, even though it makes for righteousness. You cannot present your needs to matter and force and find them a very present help in trouble. You cannot enter into fellowship with the world-soul, if it becomes capable of such communion only in yourself and others like you.

If you are to deal in meanings, we must hold that thought in God

is in kind the same as thought in us, though in degree, in clearness, in insight, there is an immeasurable difference between our slow blundering reasonings and His direct intuition; we must maintain that love in Him is in kind the same as love in us, though in length and breadth and height and depth it passeth knowledge; we must insist that will in Him is in kind the same as will in us, though in the greatness of its sweep, in the holiness of its aim, and in the wisdom and efficiency of its operation, it is as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth. We cling to this, that personality in God is essentially what it is in us, but in our lives it is dim and inchoate and slowly struggling into maturity while in the eternal Father it is perfect and self-sufficient and self-contained. With such a spirit our spirits can speak. To such a God we can pray. Such a Father will hear and answer us.

The simplest and most fundamental form of prayer is an experience of companionship with the Father in Heaven, a sense of real companionship with a Friend who is unseen but yet present. Such a personal relation is the basis and essence of all worship and supplication. With this it begins; this is the goal for which it strives.

God takes the initiative, but he

must deal with intractable material, or rather not with material, but with wills. To force them is not to win them; it is to make the winning more difficult.

The Father in heaven, then, respects the sacred rights of the personalities that He has created. He deals with us as men, not as things. Our wills must not be coerced, for forcible restraint is not development.

Lyman Abbott thus describes his own experience, "He had thought of God as a great king sitting upon a great white throne, and he tried to send his prayers up thither by a kind of wireless telegraphy, though wireless telegraphy was not then known. But later in life, when he knelt to pray, he first read something from the Gospels, then formed in his mind a picture of Jesus, sat down by the side of the man and talked with him and prayer became easy conversation."

He is like the Jesus of the gospels, for it is a fellowship with a person who deals with us as persons and whose every trait inspires love and confidence, even while it rebukes meanness and sin.

It is true of all our outward acts of devotion that their effect, instead of being hindered, is rather helped and deepened where two or three are gathered together. No man can grow in grace unless he

often retire to his closet, shut the door, and pray to the Father who is in secret; yet united petition has a momentum and weight which comes from the touch of soul upon soul. Even in the silence of Quaker meetings, often so very impressive upon mere spectators, the power of social worship is felt. There is a great loss to the spirit of devotion, if one has never felt the thrill of approaching to God with a group of like-minded seekers or in the great congregation.

Furthermore, there is a corrective to the evils of mysticism in the social emphasis of the Christian message, because it teaches that the natural and, indeed, inevitable outcome of the right sort of fellowship with God is a life of service among men.

St. Francis had visions of the highest, but he served among the lowly. Brother Lawrence practiced the presence of God, but said that he experienced that presence as much when at work in the kitchen amid the noise of the pots and pans, as when on his knees before the holy sacrament. And in general this combination of heavenly ecstasy with earthly endeavor has been characteristic of really Christian devotion, at least at its highest and purest, in all ages of the Church and in all its different divisions.

Now this social aspect of the

redeemed life is surely the best antidote for those distempers into which mysticism has sometimes fallen. There is a subtle egoism, an absorption of the soul in its own destiny, even in the longing to escape from desire, will, and thought, even in the passionate renunciation which longs to be nothing, nothing.

The ancient fable of Aesop represents the fly as sitting on the axle of the chariot and saying, "What a dust do I raise!" We men, in like manner, are given to exaggerating the consequences of our actions and the meanings of our lives.

A college football team recently became rather famous not only because of unusual success in winning games, but also because prayer always preceded such games; but it is said that they did not ask for victory; they asked that they might be enabled to play in a straight, clean, honourable manner.

The specific petitions that we present, because of our lack of insight, and our ignorance, quite frequently do not set forth the things that we ourselves want. If we obtained what we ask we should find that it is not what we are seeking. The baby that cries for the moon, the cold, desolate, dead planet that revolves around the earth; the thing it reaches for

is a bright, round, silvery disk that seems almost within reach.

The life of St. Augustine furnishes a famous illustration of this truth. A brilliant but immoral young teacher of rhetoric, he desired to go to Rome for reasons that had to do with his work, and looked no higher. His godly mother, unusually devoted to her gifted son and naturally dismayed at the thought of the temptations he would encounter there, prayed with tears that he might not leave her. He deceived her and made the voyage. The event which she had so deplored, to prevent which she had prayed so earnestly, had taken place and the answer for which she longed was not given. But from Rome he went to Milan, he came under the influence of Ambrose, in the garden of his friend Alypius he heard the voice saying, "Take and read," and opening the volume of the apostle, he found the secret victory in Christ. Now, this was the consummation that Monica had been seeking in all her years of intercession. A single earnest petition was refused, that the essence of her desire might be accorded to her. The thing she asked was denied, in order that the purpose for which she asked it might be realized.

It would seem, then, that those are in the right who say that

prayer is essentially an appeal to God, asking Him indeed whether the petition ought not to be granted, but always remembering that the decision lies with Him.

This view of the place of prayer really widens its scope. There may be objects for which we may properly strive, but for which we instinctively feel that we ought not to make request, as in the case of the college athletes mentioned. But in general prayer, under this limitation, gains in frankness and inclusiveness. We can tell the Father the whole story of what we think we need, as to things great and little, and leave it to Him with confidence that He will grant them, if it is best, and that if they are withheld there are good reasons for it. Boldness and candour mingle with reverence in the prayers of the Bible. "Righteous art thou, O Jehova, when I contend with thee; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are they all at ease that deal very treacherously?" It is the confidence of one who is sure that the ultimate issues are in safe hands, and for that very reason feels free to present his perplexities, his doubts, and even his prejudices. The field of petition is limitless because prayer looks at all things from the point of view of the eternal.

¶ Do we, like a policeman on his beat,
keep our short-wave radios constantly tuned
in to the broadcasting wave of Headquarters?

Putting Religion into Action in Personal Life

Hornell Hart

IN A WORLD like ours we need guidance and power to find life abundant for ourselves and for our fellow men. We need wisdom and dynamic—wisdom to know how our lives can count most for the rescue and the enrichment of the common life; dynamic to transform our own personalities from failure to triumph, and to go about the task of building a better world.

There is a road through the mazes and dangers of this world of ours to glorious and joyful life. There is an answer to the black enigmas of our times. There is a power by which we can go about our work with jubilant faith and courage. Many have found that way, and are finding it increasingly. Terrible problems remain to be solved. We shall do little toward solving them unless we find the sources of the power which of old gave men the vision of a world of brotherhood, and the courage to go forth and labor to bring it into being.

Nineteen hundred years ago fishermen, wresting a meager living

from Galilee, heard One speaking as man never spoke before. They left all and followed Him. They misunderstood Him. On the eve of His death they quarreled among themselves as to who should have the greatest material power under Him. When He was betrayed, they all deserted. After His death their faith almost flickered out. But something happened. These self-seeking followers were transformed into heroic leaders. In that world of slavery, abject poverty, almost universal illiteracy, unmitigated disease, and tyrannical oppression, these simple people began living their transformed lives of brotherly love.

The world today needs desperately the power and the illumination which has transformed lives in ages past. We need the power to change greedy, self-seeking and hateful personalities into leaders for a brotherly world. We need courage and faith to wrestle with the gigantic problems of our day. We need divine wisdom to find our path through the dark perplexities which confront our world.

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Christ calls on us to awaken out of the meanness of our scrambles for selfish success and for domination. He holds out to us the power to transform our lives. He leads us out of the shadows of self-centered dejection into the radiant Fellowship of those who unreservedly have given themselves to the service of the Master of Compassion. The transformation from death into life requires that outgoing love shall take the place of all self-seeking.

Jesus, pressed with the greatest responsibility in the world, repeatedly spent long hours in prayer in lonely places.

Prayer is of many kinds. There is the petition for one's own material needs, the prayer for intercession for the material or spiritual needs of others, the prayer of confession, the prayer of praise and thanksgiving, and the prayer of communion. What is the relation of these to spiritual meditation?

One might approach the Divine Presence in two different attitudes. One is represented by this prayer: "O God, the way that life is going does not fit my purposes. Please change it so that I may get what I want." The other attitude is represented by this prayer: "O God, I have failed to fit my personality and activities creatively into the growing of Thy purposes of love, truth, beauty and justice.

I am repentant. I pray that Thy will may be clear to me, and that I may learn to give myself wholly to Thy services."

A rather crude illustration may help to make this distinction clear. A generation ago policemen used to walk their beats until they ran into trouble. Then they would hurry to the nearest patrol box and telephone headquarters: "Send out the wagon; I need help!" The call would be answered by a patrol load of policemen, who would quell the riot and arrest the disorderly persons. That corresponds to the prayer of petition and intercession, and it still has its uses. But today, in the most modern cities, some policemen cruise in automobiles, with short-wave radios constantly tuned to the broadcasting wave of headquarters. When there is trouble anywhere in the city, headquarters talks to the listening policemen who are nearest the scene. They respond at once, and the resources of law and order are put to work to meet any emergency. That corresponds to meditation. The meditator does not wait until he wants something done for himself. He keeps tuned in to Headquarters, listening as those of old who said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"

We live in two worlds. One is the outer, reported to us through our eyes, ears, fingers, muscles and other sense organs. But we live

PUTTING RELIGION INTO ACTION IN PERSONAL LIFE

also in an inner world. All of the processes which are not cut off by closing the sense channels belong to this. All our values are found there. Hope, love, thought, understanding, appreciation, awareness of beauty, aspiration, creativity, decision, worship—such things continue and flourish, when the sense organs are cut off.

The inner world is the gateway to the holy of holies. It is there that we may become aware of the Divine Presence. It is there that the Master Pattern of life for us may become clear. It is there that we may obtain guidance for our next steps, and the courage and faith to go forward. Down through the ages, even to the present day, spiritual power has been given to those who have devoted time daily to meditation and prayer.

Meditation is the method by which we become more fully aware of the inner world, practice its processes, and apply its powers to the task of brotherhood and truth which are to regenerate our social order. The following steps have been tried and tested repeatedly, and have been found to produce creative results psychologically, socially, and spiritually, but they are not offered dogmatically. At all times, however, it is vital that we keep on guard against the error of depending upon a technique rather than upon the reality to which it is designed to lead.

In order to enter fully into the inner world, it is necessary to cut off for the time being the sounds, sights, and contacts of the other world. It is possible to do this in a subway train, in a railroad station, or while being driven in an automobile. But most of us find it easier to cut off the sensory world if we withdraw to some dim and quiet spot, where we feel confident we shall not be interrupted.

Having found the place, the next thing is posture. Sit down in a comfortable chair, with both feet flat on the floor, the hands on the knees, the eyes closed, and the head balanced in such a position as to keep the least possible effort to keep it erect. Other postures can be used, but this one is simple and effective.

Physical relaxation comes next. Let go of every tension. Then check over the body systematically. Having checked over the various muscles, give calm instructions that the process of relaxation shall continue. Emotional relaxation must accompany the physical if meditation is to be successful. And Intellectual relaxation is also required. The meditator must become open-minded, childlike and teachable.

If relaxation has been fully carried out, the meditator will find himself definitely in the inner world. Then begins the task of mastering the wandering impulses

of one's mind. The untrained attention is likely to flit like a butterfly from topic to topic, failing to give any subject the full and prolonged consciousness which is needed to bring full illumination. When the subject chosen for meditation is of close and vital interest to our lives, it will be less difficult to hold it in the focus of our inner attention. A frequent blunder is to allow concentration to involve tension. Concentration simply means excluding the irrelevant, and this must be done with relaxed serenity.

In our hurry to get at the problem in hand, we are prone to forget the invocation of the Highest. If we fail to invoke it, we either get no solution, or we reach a makeshift adjustment without fitting into the Master Pattern.

As meditation goes on, a sense of peace, of new strength, and of courage to go on will occur. In addition, mental clarification and illumination will come in greater or less degree. Unless the illumination is carried out into action, it will depart, and recapturing it will become increasingly difficult. One

must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Meditation has certain dangers. Three safeguards are important in group meditation. 1. Let meditation be used always as a supplement, never as a substitute for common sense and for research.

2. Let meditation be carried out always in the presence of the Highest, and in dedication to truth and brotherhood.

3. Let inner meditation lead always to outer action for the service of fellow men.

Collective meditation can be used as a highly effective method for group worship, for releasing spiritual power, for attaining harmony of purpose, and for obtaining group illumination and inspiration. Often the worshippers are led up to heights of inspiration and insight by some sincere and inspired utterance. Sometimes the silence in a Quaker meeting is dead, because those who participate are drowsing, or letting their thoughts wander idly. At other times the spiritual power is almost tangible.

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□ A great research physician, a Nobel prize winner, confirms the fact of actual miracles through prayer.

The Power and Value of the Spiritual Approach

Alexis Carrel

THE prayer which is followed by organic effects is of a special nature. First, it is entirely disinterested. Man offers himself to God. He stands before Him like the canvas before the painter or the marble before the sculptor. At the same time, he asks for His grace, exposes his needs and those of his brothers in suffering. Generally, the patient who is cured is not praying for himself. But for another. Such a type of prayer demands complete renunciation—that is, a higher form of asceticism. When it possesses such characteristics, prayer may set in motion a strange phenomenon, the miracle.

In all countries, at all times, people have believed in the existence of miracles in the more or less rapid healing of the sick at places of pilgrimage, at certain sanctuaries. But after the great impetus of science during the nineteenth century, such belief completely disappeared. It was generally admitted, not only that miracles did not exist, but that they could not exist. As the laws

of thermodynamics make perpetual motion impossible, so physiological laws oppose miracles. Such is still the attitude of most physiologists and physicians. However, in view of the facts observed during the last fifty years the attitude cannot be sustained. The most important cases of miraculous healing have been recorded by the Medical Bureau of Lourdes. Our present conception of the influence of prayer upon pathological lesions is based upon the observation of patients who have been cured instantaneously of various affections, such as peritoneal tuberculosis, cold abscesses, osteitis, suppurating wounds, lupus, cancer, etc. The process of healing changes little from one individual and another. Often, an acute pain. Then a sudden sensation of being cured. In a few seconds, a few minutes, at the most a few hours, wounds are cicatrized, pathological symptoms disappear, appetite returns. Sometimes functional disorders vanish before the anatomical lesions are repaired. The skeletal deformations of Pott's Disease, the can-

From *Man the Unknown*. By Alexis Carrel. Harper and Brothers, publishers.

cerous glands, may still persist two or three days after the healing of the main lesions. The miracle is chiefly characterized by an extreme acceleration of the processes of organic repair. There is no doubt that the rate of cicatrization of the anatomical defects is much greater than the normal one. The only condition indispensable to the occurrence of the phenomenon is prayer. But there is no need for the patient himself to pray, or even

to have any religious faith. It is sufficient that someone around him be in the state of prayer. Such facts are of profound significance. They show the reality of certain relations, of still unknown nature, between psychological and organic processes. They prove the objective importance of the spiritual activities, which hygienists, physicians, educators and sociologists have almost neglected to study. They open to man a new world.

¶ The problem of prayer in the last analysis is the problem of God. It all depends upon whether your God is more powerful than the laws of nature. Nothing is impossible to Almighty Love.

Science and Prayer

Herbert Booth Smith

HAS modern science invalidated prayer? Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, confessed that while working on his invention, whenever he came to a perplexing place, he found refuge in prayer, as a result of which his mind seemed to receive fresh inspiration and he was able to see the next step ahead. No wonder the first message sent over the wire was, "What hath God wrought!"

Science asks us to accept some hard things on faith. It says that a pin falling on the ground jars the earth and we say, "Well, we don't feel any jar, but if you say it must be so, we'll try to feel it next time you drop one—we'll do our best."

The wise scientist of today talks less dogmatically about natural laws than his father did. The fact is, there are laws beyond our ken which operate in spheres beyond

From *Science and Prayer, Studies in Communion and Intercession*. By Herbert Booth Smith. Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers.

our horizon and it is conceitedly foolish for us to suppose that all wisdom will die with us. Man by his inventive genius is discovering more and more of God's secrets but God has known them all the time.

Man can manipulate natural laws for the accomplishment of his ends—why may not God do the same? When my small boy asks me to take him in my arms, in answering his prayer I overcome gravity for the sake of love. Methinks God can do the same thing for His children.

The problem of prayer in the last analysis is the problem of God. It all depends on how big your God is. If He or It is only an automaton, an unknown Force, then It is subject to nature's laws. But if He is a Father—and Jesus said He was and He ought to know—there is nothing He wills He cannot do. For there is nothing impossible to Almighty Love.

A British scientist says that "prayer is at least as effective a force as steam or wind or water. It can now be scientifically held as one of the world's great dynamics and can rightly claim the recognition usually granted to a cosmic force." It is refreshing to Christians to see prayer recognized as a power, a force that changes things and accomplishes results which are visible in the material world.

Prayer means different things

to different people. To some people it is a luxury; they use it as they do their china, on rare occasions, when the minister comes and the like. Prayer to others is a necessity—they would no more think of doing without it than without food—they employ it as an everyday commodity. Prayer to some again is a duty, they go to prayer with as much delight as to the medicine closet; to them it is bitters, not candy. Prayer to others again is an emergency article—they use it like a life-preserver only when the ship is going down. Prayer to still others is a form; they repeat words with as much enthusiasm as they do the table of tens or the exciting alphabet—it is mere gymnastics for the lips and they hope to be heard for their much vocal exercise. But whatever prayer may be to you or to others or to me, for most people, I'm afraid, it is a failure. They say, "We pray and we don't get anywhere. Why doesn't it mean more to us?" How true it is as somebody has said, that if there should arise one utterly believing man, the history of the world might be changed; for "nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God." That's why all things are possible to him that believeth, for the believer will only desire those things which lie within the will of God.

The first essential then of victorious prayer is Faith in God. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." Some time ago I preached a sermon over the wireless. I consented to speak out into space believing in the people whom I did not see. Unbelief burns down the bridge across which my soul would march to God. It dynamites the receiver at the other end of the telephone wire, so that there is no listening ear. Sometime ago in a London hospital, a little girl was taken into the operating room. As she stood beside the operating table the doctors and nurses told her they must put her to sleep before they could make her better. "Well, if you are going to put me to sleep, I must say my prayers," was the innocent answer. Then kneeling down beside the operating table she joined her little hands and prayed:

"This night I lay me down to sleep,

I pray the Lord my soul to keep;

If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take;

And this I ask for Jesus' sake.
Amen."

When she finished, the eyes of the doctors and nurses were full of tears. The head surgeon went home to pray for the first time in thirty years.

I name as a second essential of

victorious prayer, the attitude of expectancy. The way some people pray reminds me of the story of the old lady who asked the Lord one night to remove an unsightly hill which obstructed her view, and when she arose in the morning and looked out of the window she said, "There the old thing is, just as I expected."

Wiser was the little boy who asked that prayer be offered for his sister that God would put it into her heart to read her Bible, for then he thought she would be converted. When the prayer began to be offered for his sister, he got up and left the meeting. The next time he came one of the workers reproached him for his rudeness, but he explained that he had no intention of being rude—he just wanted to run right home and see what it looked like to see his sister reading her Bible for the first time. That's the attitude of venture and expectation which our Lord delights in. As Donald Hankey put it, "Faith is betting your life that there is a God."

The third essential of victorious prayer is the genius of perseverance and persistence. Dr. Charles Wood suggests that the phone sometimes gives one or two rings and quits and we say, "Oh, well, if it is anything important, they will call again." But sometimes there comes a long distance call when the bell rings with a persistency

which brooks no denial and then we answer, lest by its continual ringing it gets on our nerves. May there not be a suggestion here about our prayers? When we ring the phone bell of prayer, don't we often run away before God gets time to answer?

I name as a fourth essential, the substitution of God's will for ours. What is the object of prayer? Is prayer demand or petition? Is the prayer-room a restaurant where we order what we want, or is it a hospital where sick souls receive the treatment the Great Physician thinks best?

Let us put it this way. There are two instruments to be tuned in key with each other, a pipe-organ and a violin. It's a great task to change the pitch of the organ but a simple one to tune the violin. Now God represents the organ and we represent in insignificance the violin. Shall we tune the great organ down to the pitch of the violin? Or shall we tune the little violin up to the pitch of the organ? One must give in. Must God accommodate His will to ours or shall we change ours to meet His?

We do not have to comprehend a process in order to enjoy its results. I do not understand electricity but I take the car downtown just the same. I do not understand the mechanism of the telephone but I've learned that by call-

ing a certain number I get my friend and so I call him up and talk to him over an avenue I cannot see. If I never used an elevator till I comprehended it I would stay downstairs all my life. If I never pray until all my queries are satisfied I shall be a stranger to God.

I venture all of us have had the experience of being driven by our burdens to the feet of God because we had nowhere else to go with them. And prayer, though so long neglected, proved a very present help in time of trouble. There is a real lesson for us all in the remark of the poor scrub woman in the Frauenkirke in Copenhagen who was at work near Thorwaldsen's famous figure of the risen Christ. A party of tourists stood before the famous masterpiece admiring its beauty when the servant said to them, "You will see Him best from your knees." It is wise advice. We never get the proper dimensions of Christ, never see how tall He is till we see Him from our knees in prayer.

When a certain group of men were discussing a proposal of work and were differing about large or small plans, one suggested that they pray about it. Another demurred saying that it was not a thing to pray about but to think out, and added that he had noticed that when men prayed about a

thing, they seemed to lose all sense of caution and felt they could do anything. For his part he did not want that spirit to lay hold of them. That was a striking testimony to the power of prayer—that it broadened the horizons of men.

Don't be discouraged because you can't see around the turn of the road. Light moves only in straight lines to you, but God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. He holds the key of the all unknown. He knows the combination of every safe in the universe. He knows the location of the secret springs which compel to action. When you reach Him you are in touch with the central energy of the Universe.

There is a wide difference between unheard prayer and unanswered prayer. God promises to hear those who seek His face aright but He nowhere promises to be a messenger boy whose business it is to deliver all packages upon demand at a given address.

Real Christian prayer includes other elements besides begging. It includes adoration, in which we adore God for what He is. It includes confession, in which we bemoan our sins. It includes praise, in which we thank Him for all His benefits. It also includes communion and intercession. Do you never call up your friend ex-

cept when you want to get something out of him? Don't you ever 'phone him just to say "good morning" and tell him you still bear him in mind?

What was the Bible conception of prayer? Prayer was a turning of the heart to God. Prayer was just the natural talking together of the soul and God. When two friends meet to commune together they do not use the conventional language of formal intercourse and so with prayer. The Talmud shows how the Hebrew baptises his whole day with prayer. On waking, he uttered one thanksgiving. While he washed, while he dressed, when he put on his shoes, when he put on his hat,—all these simple acts were attuned to prayer. The sight of the sky at night, of the opening buds of spring, of an earthquake or hurricane—all the phases of nature were opportunities for correspondence with heaven. Hence when the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, it is not to be dismissed as a mere figure of speech, but it is to be taken literally in the sense that we are to have souls with open windows, ventilated spirits if you please, ready to receive any breezes that may blow from Heaven-land and ready to broadcast our soul-throbs up to God without delay.

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Christ never lost His child-like expectancy.
He exposed His entire nature to the liquidating
radiation of His Father's presence.

What Christ Taught About Prayer

Gerald Heard

AT THE heart of the Gospels there is, besides the new Commandments, beside the new Law, more lovely but far more exacting than the old, there is, put even more briefly and tersely, a master-instruction, a set of key-rules as to how the Law is to be kept. There is only one passage in the biographies more central than the Sermon on the Mount. It is more central because it is the root from which the action ordered by the Sermon will spring, because it shows the source of power without which the Sermon, the Beatitudes, remain a magnificent but impossible demand, a splendid promise which cannot be fulfilled. That passage is therefore rightly called by a supreme title, the Lord's Prayer.

Christ was neither a dreamer building sky castles with poetic language, nor a tyrant demanding bricks without straw. He told His disciples both what He had learned of His Father's laws and also how He had been taught to live them abundantly. He made no mystery of His power. He pointed to His works, told men to believe in them,

as practical proof, if His teachings seemed beyond their grasp, told His followers that works such as this they should do. He told them that He gave because He had first received. He never suggested that He or anyone else could fulfill divine will unless He was filled with the divine power. All His years of preparation did not make Him feel that therefore He could, during the brief but pressing thirty-six months of His ministry, dispense with prayer. The decisive conviction of sonship at the Baptism, the decisive victory in the threefold initial ordeal of the Temptation; the clear recognition of His path, His goal, His relationship with His Father; His endowment with intense spiritual power; all these events and their consequences did not render Him any less persistent in that constant recharging of His whole person through regular and profound communion with the spirit of His Father. He never seems to have thought that because His "meat" was to "do the will of Him who sent me," because of His devotion, dedication and incessant ser-

From *The Creed of Christ*. By Gerald Heard. Harper and Brothers, publishers.

vice in that cause, because He was always helping, teaching, and salvaging others, therefore He was excused from turning back to the source of all His grace and replacing patiently and carefully the virtue He spent so divinely. Because time was short and evil urgent, defiant, advancing, that, to Him, did not mean that He must take not a moment off from helping the stricken and opposing the devil. "The best prayer is a good deed" would, if we are to judge by His acts, have seemed to Him dangerously woolly and unreal thinking, the conclusion of one who really knew very little about real prayer, real good, or for that matter real evil and the only sort of power which real evil respects. We may judge by the ration of His life, the balance of His time, the way in which He allotted His days, the whole strategy of His campaign to rescue beleaguered man that even He, patiently prepared and incomparably endowed, considered any disregard of, any restriction on, the life of prayer to be a criminal mistake deserving the ruin of the entire enterprise. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit truly is willing but the flesh is weak," though it takes for granted a sincere wish, which is more than many can claim, still concludes that the sheer down-swing of the body and the reflexes is sufficient to ruin a man unless

he can order his life into a series of watches so that vigilance shall be practically unbroken and un-sleeping.

If anyone might have been supposed to be able to keep in incessant, effortless, ample communion with His Father, whatever He was doing, wherever He was, surely it was He. Yet, as a matter of record we see that He never acted on the assumption—that, because He was so busy and so effective in doing good, in teaching wisdom, in transmitting love, this was enough. He did often cease from doing, though He often took the time out of the hours we give to sleep, to give Himself up wholly to receiving from the source and center of the divine wisdom, goodness and love. His working life pivoted on prayer though He knew He was God's son. His ministry was an alternation between absorption in God and transmission to man. The latter was never a substitute for the former but evidently remained continuously dependent on the former. Indeed, it seems to be conveyed in the Gospels that this was so, was necessarily so, because by this alternation, by these spells of utter communion, He was, even throughout the three brief years of ministry, still growing in further powers; the radiation which He transmitted was, to the close, gaining in volume, if not in purity of

transmission. Here was One who, because He was supremely man, the "first-fruits" of a fully human accent to God, lived a life to the end outstandingly marked by the one supreme human characteristic: youthfulness; or we may use His own word, the word today rediscovered, on their own, by the evolutionists: childfulness.

Man cannot sustain the promise of his early years. That first trust, and wonder and realization of his own ignorance, and direct poignancy at beauty and suffering—all that clearness of vision, that single-heartedness, clouds over and corrodes. He fails to remain a child, to retain, with every fresh extension of power and perspective, the original supreme gift of being interested by everything and finding everything appealing. But He who saw, and knew why the Kingdom of His Father could alone be entered by becoming like a child, He Himself so lived. He was the Son of Man, because, though greater than any of His generation, He was their junior, He was younger, He belonged, by the creative power which He allowed to keep flowing in renewal through Him, to a generation of men who, even now after two thousand years, have yet to be born. Continually by that daily rejuvenation and renewal of humility, trust, and wonder He cast off the creeping shroud of com-

placency, indifference and concession to things as men maintain they must be. So He continually achieved new powers, continually opened out into new capacities and fulfillments, continually brought out from the stored treasure deposited with Him by His Father. He never ceased releasing these inherent riches because He kept them solvent by exposing His entire nature to the liquidating radiation of His Father's presence. Hence to the end He will yield new characteristics, new essentials of being, until He, the archetypal man, can say, must say, "I and my Father are one," for man may be, must be, all that God may be in time.

The first evident reason for the extensive times given to prayer is one which we, even at our moderate level, can understand: exports must be balanced by imports—works can be accomplished only through power. Even the Sons of God while they work in the world know that, though the world is already and indeed always their Father's Kingdom, mankind is blinded to that fact and is behaving as though it were the devil's. Hence, against this black faith, so powerful in its blind conviction, even the Sons need constantly, consciously to seek their Father's presence, to stand back so as to look over the ocean of darkness at the ever-spanning ocean of light.

The second reason for so great a place being given to prayer is deeper and outside the experience, or even the recognition, of all but the advanced. That is that prayer itself is not merely the preparation for action; it is action. And this is so not at all in the perfunctory sense in which we say *orare est laborare* (too often to be able to cancel out the first part with its complement, *laborare est orare*). Prayer of the highest quality—contemplation—is literally the creation of an atmosphere, an air in which the soul can begin to breathe, a radiation in which the spirit can mutate. Such intense activity brings the air of eternity into time, and our immortal nature, which is lying drugged and cataleptic within us, stirs and begins to come out of its coma. The

holy, then, do not pray less as they become more holy. They pray more.

Nor is this quality of prayer petitionary. Those who practice this life of communion-contemplation become perfectly open apertures through which pure, timeless Being radiates into time. Christ taught prayer because by that way of life He Himself was never ceasing to become a further influence for extending power, because His radiation was becoming of always greater penetration, because He saw the evolution of His own life into the full knowledge of sonship and union as the first mutation of a new species of man, a new step, sheer and tremendous in the evolution of human consciousness.

* * *

An Apostle of Prayer

Christ's Church is in need of apostles. But how much is needed before we can earn that name, what subordination of sense to spirit, what humble consciousness of failings, what calm intelligence, what burning faith, and, above all, what glowing charity! We must become "another Christ" among men, like Him bringing a message of peace, a doctrine of liberty through the truth. It is my resolution to be an apostle of prayer, that high and fruitful form of action, the more secure because it is secret, and works with God for souls.—*Elizabeth Leseur.*

Put God first in your life, and you need have no concern. No one can retain what does not belong to him by right of consciousness, nor be deprived of that which is his.

Christ's Teachings

Emmet Fox

IT IS VERY significant that Jesus should call your consciousness the *Secret Place*. He desires, as always, to impress us with the truth that it is the inner that causes the outer, and not the outer that brings about the condition of the inner.

A distinguished Quaker some years ago said: "In my youth we discontinued the distinctive Quaker costume and certain other usages, because we realized that people who were far from really caring for our Quaker ideals were joining us, nevertheless, for the sake of the educational facilities they could obtain so inexpensively for their children, as well as other advantages of our membership. It was so easy to style oneself a 'Friend,' to purchase and wear a coat without buttons or collar, and to interlard the conversation with a grammatical peculiarity; while leaving the character completely untouched."

The Quakers are not the only people who have had to meet this problem. This danger was really

the rock upon which Puritanism was ultimately wrecked.

Jesus lays stress upon the need for keeping our prayers "alive." Merely to repeat a phrase mechanically as a parrot does (vain repetitions) is of no use at all. When praying, one should be constantly "feeling out," making himself receptive (not negative but receptive) to Divine inspiration. There is no objection to repeating a helpful phrase constantly, even without any realization at all, provided it does not become mechanical. Jesus Himself repeated His words three times at the moment of His dire need in the garden (Matt. 26:44). If ever you feel that you are getting "waterlogged" in your prayers, stop, go away and do something else, and return later on with a fresh mind.

This greatest of all prayers, which we commonly call the Lord's Prayer, is, in fact, a superb summing up of the whole of Jesus Christ's teaching, in a form unequalled for brevity and completeness. In these few verses it

From *The Sermon on the Mount*. By Emmet Fox. Harper and Brothers, publishers.

defines the nature of God and of man, and explains the true relationship between them, tells us what the universe really is, and provides a method of rapid spiritual development for those who use it intelligently every day.

Note particularly how strongly Jesus insists upon the need for forgiveness if we are to make any spiritual progress at all.

Fasting was the general custom among the people in those days, and Jesus takes the practice for granted.

Fasting, as we understand it in Scientific Christianity, is the abstention from certain thoughts, of course, but in some cases it is necessary, if you want a demonstration, to abstain for a time from thinking about a particular problem at all. There are certain problems, usually those that you have been mulling over too much, that go out or are overcome "only by prayer and fasting." In such a case you give the problem a definite and final prayer, and leave it alone, for a time; or else you hand it over bodily to someone else to handle for you, after which you keep your thoughts completely off it.

Having dealt upon the nature of the Secret Place and given Prayer or Divine Realization, as the Key of Life, Jesus goes on to stress certain consequences that follow upon all this, with the

object of showing us how we must, as speedily as possible, recast our whole lives in accordance with the new basis. For example, now that we understand that the material plane is only objectified thought, we should realize the folly of collecting or trying to collect large sums of money or goods, or material property of any kind. You cannot want for anything when once you realize that in Divine Mind demand and supply are one. And, on the contrary, until you do realize this, you never will be really safe from want.

In the long run, no one can retain what does not belong to him by right of consciousness, nor be deprived of that which is truly his by the same supreme title.

If you are putting God first in your life, you will not find yourself laboring under undue anxiety about anything, for *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

The same principle applies to all the details of everyday living. If you pray for yourself in the right way every day, you will find the minor things of life will gradually fall correctly into place of their own accord without any bother on your part. *If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light.* This is the summation of Truth. Verily, if the *eye be single, thy whole body of experience shall be full of light.*

Man is essentially spiritual, the image and likeness of God, and therefore he is made for the Spiritual Basis, and he cannot easily succeed on any other. The birds of the air and the lilies of the field furnish a striking lesson to man in their complete adaptation to the laws of their own respective planes. They thoroughly express their own true natures; they go through their lives perfectly themselves, and without knowing anything like the worry and anxiety that warp so many human lives. The lilies referred to are the beautiful wild poppies of the East, and whoever has seen a field of poppies dancing and swaying in the breeze will appreciate the sense of relaxation and irresponsible freedom and joy that Jesus had in mind as being our true birthright.

Of course, He did not mean that you as a human being should copy the lives and methods of the birds or flowers literally, for you are infinitely higher in the scale of creation than they are. The lesson is that you are to adapt yourself as completely to your element as they do to theirs. Your true element is the Presence of God. Augustine said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they repose in Thee."

If you are very worried and confused or very much discouraged, that is the time to lie down

among the poppies mentally, and read the Bible or pray gently but persistently until something happens. Either something within yourself or something in the outer picture. This is not *laissez faire*, because you are praying. A woman in London, whose affairs seem to have gotten into a hopeless tangle that meant utter ruin, was persuaded by me to drop the whole burden mentally and "let the worst happen," while she spent two or three days browsing through the Bible and praying for peace and happiness. Everything cleared up like magic within a week without her taking any material action.

The normal mode of obtaining one's supply is by following some useful business or profession in which one should be happy and satisfied, doing good work and receiving a liberal compensation for it. Scientific prayer will put anyone into such a position if he does as he should, realizing true place, and claiming opportunities for service, his actual position, whatever it is, will be continually improving as time goes on. What is certain is that no one upon the Spiritual Basis will lead the life of an idler, however much money may be had.

One hears occasionally of curious cases of people claiming to be so spiritual that they do not feel called upon to earn their own liv-

ing. Someone else, a relative, or a friend, who is not too spiritual to go to work, is expected to keep them in idleness. If you really wish to try the experiment of "stepping out" upon the power of the Word, by all means do so; but be sure your doing so is authentic. The only way to make this experiment in a genuine manner is to let it be "demonstrate or starve." If you are secretly looking to someone else to come to the rescue, you are not really depending upon the Word.

Jesus tells us that by taking thought we cannot add one cubit to our stature. This is one more way of stating the great truth that He states in so many ways; namely, that we have to be born again. As long as you remain the man that you are, you cannot by merely taking thought be or do anything except what you are (because, of course, you always do what you are); you can only get

"anywhere" as they say, by becoming a different man, and this you can only do by getting some realization of the Presence of God.

Always remember that the only thought that you need to concern yourself with is the present one. The thoughts of yesterday or of last year do not matter now, because if you get the present thought right it will make everything else right here and now. The best way to prepare for tomorrow is to make today's consciousness serene and harmonious. All other good things will follow upon that.

Never go delving into your mind to look for troubles to pray or treat about. Deal faithfully with those that bring themselves to your attention, and hidden things will be taken care of.

We are to dwell upon Life, and not death, and to concentrate upon making our demonstration here and now.

* * *

It may be your prayer is like a ship which, when it goes on a very long voyage, does not come home so soon; but when it does come home it has a richer freight! Mere "coasters" will bring you coals or such ordinary things, but they that go afar to Tarshish return with gold and ivory. Coasting prayers, such as we pray every day, bring us many necessities; but there are great prayers which, like the old Spanish galleons, cross the ocean and are longer out of sight, but come home laden with a golden freight.—*Spurgeon*.

☞ A well-known Episcopalian clergyman discusses the reasons why prayer has become "the great lost art."

Why People Do Not Pray

Bernard Iddings Bell

IT HAS never been possible to be religious, in any adequate sense of the word, without prayer. If religion means "living with God",—and no other definition is either sufficiently definite or competently vital,—then there must be involved in it a manner of communication between man and God. It is not necessary that speech shall always accompany such companionship, once it is established. Everyone knows how satisfactory it is to be with certain people, or more often with a certain well-loved person, and to speak for hours on end not one syllable. But even in such delightful human relationship there must continue an active spiritual out-going of the persons each toward the other; heart speaks to heart in a silence of fellowship. Nothing flowers in a silence that is born of absent-mindedness and indifference. A man can hardly expect to hold the love of his wife if he addresses to her only casual and formal scraps of speech, directs toward her only vague and distracted thoughts. Everybody un-

derstands that about earthly comradeships; but there are many who seem to suppose that in case of friendship between a human person and that person who is called God there is no need for making any particular effort in the way of constant intercommunication.

Most modern people hardly pray at all; and all too many of those who still do bother to address the Almighty are content to do it in what is little more than a patter of words long since become mechanical.

Why has prayer become "the great lost art"?

Probably the chief reason is that even those who call themselves Christians are more impressed than they are willing to admit by a current insistence on the part of the general multitude that it does no good to pray. "Science has plainly shown us how everything moves according to invariant law," the common argument runs, "and therefore recourse to prayer is infantile. God, admitting that there is one, will

From the Atlantic Monthly.

not change His infinite plan in response to the feeble command of microscopic human ants who crawl about on some second-rate planet which moves round an insignificant star in a universe vast beyond computation, and law-abiding from one end of it to the other (if indeed it has any ends)." So the Christian is always being told; or sometimes his friends do not feel it polite to remind the poor obscurantist of his folly, but simply smile wisely when he speaks of prayer, as they might smile at a little boy who spoke of writing letters to Santa Claus. The Christian is apt to resent the imputed slight to his intelligence; but he too often feels, it may be only in the subconscious mind, that possibly there may be something in what these people say; and so the first thing he knows, or even without knowing it, he has stopped praying or has, at best, reduced his talk with God to a vestigial routine. It is not that he has ceased to believe that there is a God; he has come to think that, care or not, God is so self-limited by the inexorability of law that he can do nothing to help.

We must not forget that we human beings, limited as we are in intelligence, do not know and understand all the law of God. We know only a small part of that law. The part which we do not

understand we may call supernatural law. The boundary line between them is movable. Three hundred years ago the laws governing electricity were all unknown to us, and the manifestations of electricity were therefore regarded by everyone as supernatural. When lightning struck it was a mysterious and direct interposition of the hand of God. But we learned some of the laws governing electricity. Although even yet no man knows what electricity is, its manifestations we now recognize as controlled by natural laws. At this present time certain laws governing mental processes are gradually becoming incorporated into "natural law" from "supernatural law." God's law is one. To us it has two parts, that we know and that we do not know.

Petition, to be religious and not magical, must be clothed in words something like this: "Behold, O God, me, your servant, in my need. If my own wisdom were sufficient to understand this situation in which I find myself, if my own will were to determine what is to be, so and so would be done about it. I therefore ask, naturally, that in that fashion things may come to pass. Nevertheless, O God, I am an ignorant person and a willful one; and it may well be that I am quite wrong in my desire. If it be so, then act not as I request.

but as your greater wisdom deems best; in which case, give me patience and strength to do what you want done, no matter what that may cost me. Amen."

That was the sort of prayer taught and practiced by Jesus Christ. The *Our Father*, for example, has in it from end to end not one single bit of magic or attempted magic. Every word in that prayer is religious, God-centered. The only material blessing asked for is *bread*, sustenance that one may do one's part in the carrying out of God's will, as in Heaven, so on earth.

Christ went forth to do what it was necessary in the Divine Plan that He do, utterly unafraid.

Christian asking must be done in that fashion. All the saints have known it. "What makes you so joyful in the midst of your pain, here in this cold and leaky barn?" they once asked the dying Francis of Assisi. "I wish what God desires," he replied. And there is the more modern story of the boy who prayed for the electric train. He had seen it, in November, in a shop window; and he much desired it. He was ten years old. He told his mother that he was going to pray every night that he might get it from someone for a Christmas gift. His mother trembled a little as she listened to him, for she was a poor sewing woman

with several children to feed. He could never have that expensive toy. Would the asking God for it and the eventual disappointment upset the child's faith? She said nothing, she could say nothing; and every night she heard the boy's simple appeal to his Lord. Christmas came. There was no train. That night as her son knelt down by her side to pray, the mother said, "I hope, John, that you are not terribly distressed because God did not answer your request for the train." The child looked at her in a sort of wonder. "Why, Mother," he replied, "God answered me all right. He said 'No.'" It is hard to put the matter more simply than that, or more adequately.

Vocal prayer is an antidote to pride and a preventive of the dangerous flights of an undisciplined and fanciful imagination. But for all its necessity, vocal prayer rarely unlocks any but the outer chambers of reality.

For further penetration into the courts of God, there is also to be followed *discursive or meditative* prayer. In that sort of prayer, one takes some event, utterance, or character from the records of God's dealing with men—from the Bible, from the lives or writings of the saints, sometimes from the daily newspaper or from one's remembered experience — and

brings into play upon it every activity of the mind, in an attempt to ascertain and understand and accept and rejoice in God as He is revealed in terms of the event.

A priest had advised the boys and girls of his parish, on their way to or from school, to pray a moment before the Lord in His Sacrament. One afternoon, as the good father went past his church, an urchin of twelve or so ran out the door, a baseball in his hand. "Been praying?" inquired the priest. "Yes, Father," "And what were you saying to our Lord Jesus today, my son?" "Nothing, Father. I was just loving Him awhile."

It is hard to recover such simplicity later on in life. It is not easy so to become as little children that we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Highest of all is *contemplative prayer* — prayer truly mystical,

prayer in which one wholly loses one self and is taken up into a complete and absorbing unity with God—the end of heart's desire, an earthly impartation of all that makes up Heaven. That sort of prayer is a thing not to be attained by anyone's desire, however long and diligent his practice, however true his belief. It is, rather, a gift of God Himself. God gives it only to those who are willing to plod on according to the vocal, meditative, and affective disciplines; but not always even to those. Not often does it come to anyone, nor should we think of demanding it.

To help in the prayer life of a Christian, there stands the stern, kind figure of One who is of men and yet of God, at once the object and teacher of prayer, the unchanging Christ. He is not so much a figure of debate as He is the way to God.

* * *

A Prayer

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

The Silent Minute

Howard Marshall

TOMORROW night, the B.B.C. are starting what seems to be a very interesting and significant experiment. At the beginning of the 9 o'clock News we shall hear Big Ben striking, and it takes Big Ben a full minute to strike the quarters and the hour. The News will wait for that minute, while we hear the familiar tones of Big Ben.

Every night it will be a minute specially set apart for us to use as we will. Now, there's more in this than you'd think at first. If it means nothing to you, all right: there's Big Ben to tell you all's well and there's an end of it. But a great many people of all kinds have suggested that the B.B.C. should set aside a time every day when they might share their thoughts with other listeners. For some, this minute will be a minute of unity in prayer; for others, a minute of recollection and consecration to the national cause; for others, a minute when they may think of those dear to them, but far away, and perhaps in danger. For others, again, it may mean a pause for thoughts of those they've lost.

It's not for me to suggest how we may use this minute; that would be an impertinence; but I only know that it may be an important minute, perhaps for a great many people the most important minute of the day.

I felt very strongly that throughout the country people are seeking a unity of purpose which goes even deeper than the deep and obvious loyalties to our common cause. We are united as a nation as we've never been before; that's quite certain.

But there's something beyond that, even. We are determined that out of this world chaos shall come a better world, a world in which words like Freedom and Justice shall have a fuller meaning, and we seek a new and finer way of life.

There's no doubt that we must face the future courageously, that we must build for the future wherever we may; above all, that we must find fresh standards on which to build, and some will be seeking those standards as Big Ben strikes.

Well, there it is. There's been a demand for this minute, and the B.B.C. have met it.

From The National Message, London, England, Jan. 8, 1941.

Years ago the little daughter of the late Prof. Frank Almy of Grinnell College came into the house all spattered with mud from head to toe. Her mother exclaimed, "What happened to you, dear?" The little girl replied, "Jesus could walk on the water, but Peter and me squashed right in."

Two women came to their pastor to settle a dispute. One of them said, "When I lose my thimble, I kneel down and ask God to direct me to the place where it may be found." The other said she didn't take this view of the function of prayer. "When I lose my thimble," she said, "I ask God to teach me to be more orderly."

Robert Speer tells about a little girl who was trying to move a large table. Her mother said, "Dearie, you can't move that table; why it is as big as you are." To which her reply was, "Yes, I can, for I'm as big as it is."

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The Boston Dispensary, Boston, Mass.

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Yesterday a friend handed me a copy of CLEAR HORIZONS, an entirely new magazine to me, and when I opened the first page, there were many of my friends—Evelyn Underhill, Claude Bragdon, Basil King, Emerson, and last but not best, Glenn Clark! What a grand surprise and pleasure! I am enclosing a check for \$1.00 for a year's subscription. Could you begin with, including, the March issue (Vol. 1, No. 4)? There are so many good things in it.

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PRAYER IS COMMON SENSE

GLENN CLARK

Prayer is merely sublimated common sense. Common sense is the most uncommon commodity on earth today. Sublimated common sense is so rare that when it is met with, it is usually called a stumbling block by some, and foolishness by others. A hundred years later the one who practices it is called a genius or a saint.

Flowers open their petals to the sun and cattle stand with their heads bowed toward the grass. While we could hardly call that religion, we could very properly call it common sense, for the flowers and the cattle are simply turning all day long toward their source of life. Arthur Brisbane in his column read by twenty million people wrote: "Big corporations are willing to pay fifty thousand dollars a year to executives to sit in front of an empty desk and look out of the window for four hours a day and *think straight* and they cannot find men to fill the need." Is the reason for this shortage the fact that so few men today are turning to their source of life?

Had our entire nation in 1917, instead of going to war, turned like the cattle on a thousand hills toward its source of life; had our entire nation, like the lilies of the field, opened its heart and soul to the skies instead of to war there would have been that year a negotiated peace, not a conqueror's peace, a million boys that died in 1918 would not now be lying in Flanders Field. France would not have been bled white, Russia would not have turned toward Communism, Versailles would not have been, Fascism and Nazism would not have been born, and we would not now be in the throes of another war. Had our leaders led us to prayer instead of to war in 1917, it would have sounded like foolishness to some, like a stumbling block to others, but today these leaders would be considered either geniuses or saints—or possibly both.

The brute in us will always make men go to war, we are told. But brutes do not kill each other. A lion never kills a lion—he kills his meat. The Swift and Cudahy plants take that job off our hands. All that mankind needs to do to make this world a wonderful place to live in is to behold the flowers of the field, the birds of the air, and the cattle on a thousand hills and, like them, turn constantly toward our source of life. Yes, prayer is nothing but sublimated common sense.
